

# OPEN HERITAGE

◆ CHANGING MUSEUMS ◆ CHANGING COMMUNITIES ◆  
◆ CHANGING TRADITIONS ◆

Complexul Național Muzeal ASTRA Sibiu | Museene i Sør Trøndelag Trondheim  
2016

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Editura „ASTRA Museum”  
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## OPEN HERITAGE

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EEA Grants.

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## THE OPEN HERITAGE PROJECT

Based on the agreement between the states of the European Economic Area (EEA – Norway, Island, Liechtenstein) and the Romanian Government concerning the implementation of the EEA Grants 2009-2014, ASTRA National Museum Complex was designated as beneficiary of the predefined project within PA16/RO12 “*Conservation and revitalization of the cultural and natural heritage*”.

As predefined project, *Open Heritage – Increased public accessibility to multiethnic heritage values in ASTRA Museum*, received a 100% nonrefundable financing in the amount of 3,500,054 euros, from which 85% through the EEA Grants 2009-2014, and 15% representing the national contribution.

This has confirmed the acknowledgement of the results obtained in the previously implemented project which had the same financing source and whose title was “Conservation and restoration of the ethnographic heritage in the Open Air Museum from Dumbrava Sibiului”, project through which proved the ad-

ministrative and specialized capacity of reaching all the proposed cultural indicators and investment indicators, with an absorption rate for the available fund of 99.9%. This project also meant the start of the new cooperation between the current partners.

The purpose of the project Open Heritage (implemented in the timeframe 2014-2016) is to make ethnic minorities’ heritage from ASTRA Museum available for large audiences. The main outcome of the project consists of ethnic minorities’ heritage safeguarded, documented, promoted and thus made publicly accessible.

The project takes into account ethnicity as a mixture of two or more ethnic groups sharing at some point the same territory to various extents. The perspective is merely historic only by bringing to focus various types of co-existence: indigenous people, historic minorities/colonization during medieval times, up to modern immigration (migrants or expats).

The project's results are:

- The Multicultural Museum Pavilion – a new building that has a double functionality: not only to shelter the heritage of ASTRA Museum of Transylvanian Civilization, but also to offer better, modern welcome facilities for the museum's visitors. The pavilion became both the headquarters of ASTRA Museum of Transylvanian Civilization, hosting staff and over 32.000 items under proper conditions, and the main entrance to the ASTRA Museum of Traditional Folk Civilisation – the open air museum - offering appropriate receiving conditions for the public and guiding it towards a unique museum experience.
- 18 Monuments from the open air museum, representative for different ethnic groups living across Romania, were either reconstructed, restored and/or conserved;
- 2000 cultural goods from ASTRA Museum of Transylvanian Civilization; were restored or conserved
- A program for heritage interpretation through cultural animations was developed and implemented, focusing on minorities inclusion, named the “Path of ethnic minorities”;
- A new permanent exhibition regarding the tangible and intangible heritage was opened in the new pavilion, and other two temporary exhibitions were organized, one of which in Norway;

- Partnership actions, the cultural history of minorities from Romania and Norway were documented and experience and good practice example in the field of museology were exchanged with the Museums of South Trøndelag (MiST), Trondheim, Norway.

The goal of the joint actions is to reinforce the cooperation between ASTRA Museum and MiST through common activities. The topic of the documentation activities is represented by the ethnographic cultural heritage of the minorities: context, role, current situation. The purpose of the documentation consisted in discovering and raising awareness on how mutual understanding can be improved by acknowledgement and promotion of the cultural heritage of minorities: sites, crafts, habits, folklore, festivals and cultural landscapes.

For detailed information about the project visit:  
[www.patrimoniudeschis.ro](http://www.patrimoniudeschis.ro)

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*Mirela Iancu, coordinator of Work Package 3, ASTRA Museum*

## EXPERIENCES FROM WORKING IN BILATERAL PROJECTS

The relation between ASTRA Museum and Museums of South Trøndelag goes a long way back. In 2009, just after the Museums of South Trøndelag was established, when a group of us still worked at the regional museum Sverresborg, Trøndelag Folk Museum, a group of professionals from ASTRA Museum came to visit. They were planning their conservation building, and they were looking for inspiration for new EEA-grant project partners. The two groups connected immediately. Our way of thinking museum and museum development were surprisingly similar: we were both looking for new ways to connect to our local society, we were both interested in minority groups that hardly had been represented in our museums, and we both had good experiences in working in international projects.

As time went on (and everybody involved in project development knows that time flies and ideas develop, people and organizations change), MiST were established as a consolidated museum organization comprising nine museums in the region

of South Trøndelag. The group of people that formerly had been attached to Sverresborg museum were now in the ‘mother organization’ MiST, in the department for research and development. This led to a concretization of the cooperation with ASTRA, and we started the EEA-grant project Open Heritage – Increased public accessibility to multi-ethnic values in ASTRA Museum.

This project is large and comprehensive. Although most of the action take place in Romania, MiST was involved in the work package 3 – documenting cultural heritage of minorities through bilateral actions,<sup>24</sup> that included research and exhibition work. Several study visits were arranged in both Romania and Norway, joining colleagues in the fieldwork gave us a profound insight into each other's regional challenges and possibilities, and provided an extra round of reflection in the work we do at home. Although the differences between our regions are striking, the similarities to how the museums work became important in the development of the project parts we both were involved in. One of the things

## EDITORS FOREWORD

we noticed, were the rapid changes both regions went through at the time. In our view, the societal changes needed to be followed by changes in how the museum communicated with the local communities, and also how we represented the different communities.

The changing role of museums has been a key point in museum discourse in recent years, including in all strategic planning in most museums. Museums have become important actors in social integration and local democratization. In MiST strategies we have emphasized the need to work with diversity and inclusion as one of the priority areas. This influenced the development of the joint exhibition between Astra and MiST. We chose Kystmuseet in South Trøndelag as arena both for the research and the exhibition.

Kystmuseet is located on the island of Hitra, a community that has rebuilt itself from a demographic and economic recession in the 70s and 80s, largely because of the success of the industry. What started as a local company has been transformed into an international success, and the industry has in many ways transformed the coastal community. The museum project “migrant workers and the local museum” looks at changing social and cultural environment in a traditional local museum and how - or if

– the museum manages to make itself relevant to and in dialogue with ‘newcomers’.

The project consisted of documentation of the stories behind the large contingent of migrant workers who have settled on Hitra, Changes/Schimbäri/Endring, the joint exhibition and this publication.

Those involved are:

Hanna Mellemsether has been local project manager in MiST, the project group consisted of Petter Søholt and Ann Siri Garberg, all from the department of Research and development in MiST. From Kystmuseet on Hitra, Berit Johanne Vorpbuk was the primary contact, with Magnar Ansnes and Svein Bertil Sæter involved in planning and exhibit work. Insa Müller, NTNU is externally engaged in the project, and she included our small research result in her ongoing Ph.D. project. Ola Svein Stugu professor in History at NTNU had an advisory role in the project.

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*Hanna Mellemsether, coordinator of Work Package 3, MiST*

This publication is a result of the cooperation between Astra Museum and MiST. The articles from Norway are also a product of the collaboration between the different museums within the MiST organization, and with research groups at the Norwegian University of Technology and Science, NTNU, and at the Norwegian center for traditional music and dance. Museums are not only responsible for traditions and the past, but have a profound responsibility to document cultural traits that are new, that happen in the here and now and which contribute to changing in our society, communities and culture. The future history is created now. Odd Are Berkaak defines the concept contemporary history and the museums’ responsibility towards the documentation of it in the book *På sporet av den tapte samtid* (“In search of lost present”) from 2009.<sup>1</sup> In the introduction chapter, he writes

this about the museums role in documenting and disseminating contemporary cultural phenomena: “By directing public attention towards phenomena while they are under development, museums could participate in the process towards creating new norms. A persistent focus on contemporary issues will help to put names on the new and what’s different while it is under development” (Berkaak 2009:13).

The articles we present here deal with contemporary history and cultural phenomena, and with contemporary communities. The authors explore the concepts of *change*, *dialogue* or *engagement* in their articles. These concepts are at the core of much museum development today, yet they present challenges both on a theoretical level and in the everyday work in the museums. In Norway, the turn towards “new museology” started because of official museum poli-

cies from the late 1990's on. Museums are often traditional institutions that do not change easily. Following the new museum relationship to the community, museums have to some extent put a new focus on the audience, but the consequences of this turn are in no way easy to understand.

The first article in this part of the book has its origin in one of our first assiduous attempts to practice dialogue and engagement during a planning process in a museum. In order to find ways of changing the dissemination in an open air museum, Hanna Mellemsether (researcher) and Insa Müller (then a post graduate student) invited three quite different groups of people to get involved in developing the plans. The interaction between the museum and local community groups are discussed in light of different theories of dialogue. The article reveals some of the dilemmas that arise from the dialogue, as the museum's authority are challenged by participants in the dialogue.

The work done in this first dialogue project, were not conclusive and the case presented did not materialize into reality at the time. However, the interest

in dialogue and engagement and the understanding of the challenges and possibilities was recognized. In our work with the joint exhibition as part of the EEA-grants project Open Culture, we used dialogue and engagement as a method in connecting the museum to the work migrants at Hitra. Insa Müllers article explore interviews as method of engagement, analyzing the meetings between museum workers and migrants in the local community. A conscious use of interview with a dialogic approach can be a tool for museums to established sustainable relationships to new groups of visitors. Local history museums in areas with rapid demographic changes will, through the dialogic approach, get an in-depth knowledge of the community, and thus, will be able to engage new groups of museum users.

Interviews with informants have always been a natural part of museum work. In Ann Siri Hegseth Garberg and Anne Mette Gottschal's article, the traditional interview makes up the fundament for establishing contact between museum, archive and immigrants that has put a mark on local communities for

decades, namely the immigrants running food shops in the Trøndelag region in Norway. The project was a cooperation between archive and museum with a wish to preserve histories connected to the immigrant shops as a contemporary phenomenon with implications for how people live, eat and work in our region. In addition to the collection of factual information about small businesses in our region, the project gave important knowledge about a group of people that have lived and worked in here for decades, but whose history are rarely represented in the museum collections or archives.

The importance of being represented in a museum is discussed in Torstein Bachs article. He show by examples how museums have power to include histories and groups of people, and thereby give minorities a voice, a right to be heard as a group. Bach argues that by using their collections and their knowledge, museums can have an impact on social and political discourses, and that they therefore have a duty to engage with groups outside the museum.

We end our part of this project with quite a differ-

ent example of museum/audience interaction. Tone Honningsvåg Erlien's article is about dialogue and engagement first and foremost in disseminating traditional dance to audiences of today. Not being satisfied that dance is presented in museums as illustrations and static activities from the past, as visual entertainment for tourists, she suggest that traditional dance should be used as a way that show the real function of traditional dance as a means of social interaction, and the museum as a social *locale*.

The articles published by ASTRA Museum deal mainly with the cultural identity of ethnical minorities in Romania, with a special focus on Roma population's tangible and intangible cultural heritage, contributing thus to the objectives of the Program PA16/RO12 "Conservation and revitalization of cultural and natural heritage".

The articles represent only part of the documentation work conducted by the curators of ASTRA Museum during this project. The results were also used in the re-contextualization of the 15 monuments included on the Path of Ethnic Minorities, in

the program for heritage interpretation through cultural animations, in the realization of the permanent exhibition of the ASTRA Museum of Transylvanian Civilization and in the educational activities along the period of implementation.

Also, documentation supported the realization of the common temporary exhibition *Changes/Schim-bări/Endring* that reflected at its best the cooperation between the two museum institutions. A daring exhibition, meant to transform the data collected during the research into a story about people, enhancing the visitor experience by story sharing and interactive installations. Shadowing the story of the museum and highlighting the personal story of the dialogue partners (the members of the labor migrants from Hitra and the *rudari* community in Poiana), the exhibition is meant to engage the visitor into a discovery quest of origins and traces throughout Europe, understanding thus that different communities, in different parts of the world can share similar stories of shame and glory.

The first article describes both the method and re-

sults of the documentation and field work conducted by both teams of researchers in the community of *rudari* living in the village Poiana, Perișani, Vâlcea County. The first part of the article deals with harmonizing methods of research and engaging local communities in being part of the museum life, considering the necessary steps into changing attitudes not only in research but museum work in general. The field research walks the path of former researchers of ASTRA Museum in the 60's, in the attempt to restore and create new cultural context for the Rudari Homestead and Workshop from Poiana, restored in the open air museum. The focus of the attempt, after more than half a century, is not the craft itself, but people living in the community, and the way in which the museum is or can become relevant for this community. The dialoguing method developed with the project partner was applied and valuable input was added to the museums database. The attempt enriched both contemporary and historical perspective on the existing collection and on the evolution and adaptability of the community.

Adrian Scheianu writes about a famous fiddlers' community in the southern part of Romania. Roma fiddlers have a long tradition in Romania, dating back to the 16th century. The article presents the evolution of the musician village, from village entertainers to film stars, and the continuous adaptation process they had to undertake in order to survive.

Szeklerland (Secuime), lying in the Eastern part of Transylvania, is characterized by a reversed ethnic composition that the rest of the country, in which Romanians are a minority ethnic group. The study case of a Roma community living at the outskirts of the Zagon village, presented by Dana Botoroaga Bercu, shows the struggle of identity and the feeble economic perspectives related to a traditional craft specific to this community: wood carving.

Oana Burcea's paper deals also with a Roma community from Sibiu County. Transylvania is an area with very reach examples of multicultural and multi-ethnic communities and the article deals with the changes in the cultural landscape of Brateiu village, inhabited by Romanians, Saxons, Hungarians and

Roma, focusing on the relationships and exchanges among the village ethnic group.

The traditional folk costume was considered an identity mark for the population living in the multicultural, multiconfessional Transylvania. There were some items of clothing though, more than others, those were showing ethnic, social and economic status, sometimes under really strict rules. Sibiu has a very reach history in hat making and Karla Rosca documented it together with a thorough research in the collections of ASTRA Museum and offers us significant context around a hatter's workshop.

Lucian Robu and Stefan Păucean deal also with identity in the multicultural village of Carasova in Banat region. Apart from the ethnographic study, the article deals with using or changing the ethnic affiliation as a means to easy accessing the EU work community in Croatia and Austria.

Franz Binder Museum of World Ethnography, part of The ASTRA Museum Complex, is well-known for its exotic collections. In her article, Adriana Avram shows another side of the bilateral interaction and

exchange of knowledge by presenting a 3-step method for re-contextualization of a small collection originating in Norway, of Sámi indigenous people. This method could represent a good practice example for

raising / gaining context awareness and generate content and interpretation for exotic collection in museums worldwide.

## FROM AUDIENCE TO PARTICIPANTS: ENGAGING THROUGH DIALOGUE

*Hanna Mellemsæther, Insa Müller*

### ABSTRACT

Artikkelen utforsker ulike forståelser og bruk av dialog som en inkluderende museumspraksis i en planprosess. Vi anvender en praktisk-teoretisk tilnærming til begrepet dialog, som tar høyde for deltakernes ulikheter og dialogens relasjonelle aspekt. Vi diskuterer noen mulige konsekvenser av å involvere folk utenfra museet helt fra begynnelsen i planprosesser.

Vår eksempelstudie stammer fra et forprosjekt til en plan for fornyelse av formidlingen i et friluftsmuseum, hvor tre ulike brukergrupper ble invitert til å delta i utviklingen av planen. Selv om eksempelstudien ikke ble videreført i et større prosjekt, gjorde vi erfaringer som viser at en dialogisk metode ikke truer

museenes troverdighet som kunnskapsinstitusjoner. Tvert i mot vil forbindelsen mellom museene og brukerne styrkes gjennom medvirkning tidlig i planprosesser.

Vi fant ingen motsetning mellom å ivareta en nødvendig autoritet som museene som læringsarenaer må inneha, og det å involvere folk utenfor museet også i planprosesser. I vår studie fant vi at dialogens formål, kontekst og metode må diskuteres og avklares på forhånd. Det krever kunnskap og egenrefleksjon fra museets side dersom man skal kunne ta på alvor de utfordringer medvirkning gir.

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<sup>1</sup>Berkaak, Odd Are: "Samtidshistorie og fortidsrelatering" in Berkaak, Are, Ågot Gammersvik, Svein Gynnild, Inger Johanne Lyngø (eds.) *På sporet av den tapte samtid*. Norsk Kulturråd. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget 2009

*“I do not think we should include people from the outside into the planning processes in museums. We can do that after we have decide what to do”*

*“We should not undermine our authority by allowing ordinary people to make exhibitions in the museum”*

*“Museums should not have an opinion – we deal with facts”*

*“It has to be correct!”*

The above quotes came from people inside and outside museums in discussions around the changes following the focus on audience participation and engagement. Although participation and engagement<sup>1</sup> are key concepts in much of today’s museum theory, and has been for almost two decades, it has proved difficult to make these buzzwords part of ordinary museum practice.

This article explores different understandings and uses of dialogue as a participatory museum practice in a planning process, and discusses what consequences it might have when we commit to involving

people outside the museum from the start. The case study used here as examples of different methods of dialogue, was conducted a few years ago as part of a pre-project planning a renewal of the dissemination in a traditional open-air museum.<sup>2</sup> The article contributes to discussions of possibilities and limitations to dialogue in the museum practice, and advocates a flexible and situated understanding of dialogic approach.

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*INSA MÜLLER, Norwegian University of Science and Technology - NTNU, PhD Candidate. Müller is currently working on a thesis about local history museums in an age of globalization. Her areas of research interest are museology, history didactics, community engagement, and cultural studies.*

## INTRODUCTION

The term “new museology” represents a paradigm shift in museum theory and practise, and it has given us a new understanding of what role museums should have in society. In Norway as in other countries, museums are expected to interact with their audiences, to offer positive experiences to individuals, and to be relevant and accessible for their communities. In draft resolutions and white papers regarding museums, the Norwegian Department of Culture expects museums to contribute towards democratisation of the society on different levels, and to be more democratic and open institutions themselves. Museums must adapt an inclusive practice, ensuring that not only the content of the museums’ dissemination, but also the way knowledge is created and conveyed, are connected to

the role as a social institution. This implies a turn from object centred to human centred institutions (Holmesland 2015). In that role, dialogue and engaging with people outside the museum are necessary to maintain the obligations to society. The Norwegian government’s management documents, explicitly asks museums to be “institutions of dialogue”, and states that dialogue is “a strong and meaningful foundation for a museum”.<sup>3</sup> The expression “institutions of dialogue” are not elaborated on, and thus it will be, and should be, open to interpretations and negotiation.

## DIALOGUE

Dialogue is mostly used to describe a learning method in museums, meaning a form of communication that are symmetrical, empathetic and open to argu-

ments and change of points of view (Dyste 2011:24). There is a growing number of studies discussing dialogical museum practice and the need to develop a more profound involvement and engagement of groups outside the museum. Some of these studies look at dialogue related to the use of new media and technology. Social media and developing technologies bring about new potentials, possibilities and challenges with regards to dialogue between museums, visitors and other groups outside the. (Russo and Peacock 2009). Concepts like 'wiki', 'co-creation' and 'crowdsourcing' arise from the digital world, and imply a new relationship between museums and the public. This new relationship between community and museum are characterized by dialogue, equality and shared interests.

We understand a dialogic museum practise to be more than just two-ways communication; it also means that communication has a democratic, non-oppressive, egalitarian frame, and that power is equally distributed between the participants in the dialog. In our quest for an applicable definition of the

dialogic approach that we wanted for our study, we initially went back to Paolo Freire's theoretical reflections on dialogue as they can be found in his critical pedagogy (Freire 2000:87), and Habermas' sociological and philosophical project, which aims at understanding and creating preconditions for democracy (Freire 2000; Habermas 1984). Freire's and Habermas' conceptions inform today's general understanding of dialogue (Lindauer 2007). Social anthropologist Odd Are Berkaak has shown how Freire's' critical pedagogy has influenced the Norwegian museum field (Berkaak 2003). Habermas expected outcome of the ideal dialogue is a consensus based on rational arguments. However, to us, consensus was not the goal with the dialogue, but rather we looked to be inspired, to be challenged and to learn from each other. This valuation of difference and the relational aspect of dialogue is emphasized by educational philosopher Nicholas C. Burbules, and provided us with an operational understanding of dialogue (Burbules and Bruce 2001; Burbules 2007). Still, the egalitarian and non-authoritative nature of dialogue as defined by Freire, Haber-

mas and Burbules, challenges the traditional authoritative voice of the museum and museum workers. Museums as institutions of education are accountable for the programmes and exhibitions they offer. Thus, they need to be trustworthy and exert a certain control of the content they provide. "Otherwise the audience collectively creates the stories (plural), some of which are wrong and others simply (in the museum's view) unedifying", as one commentator to one of Nina Simons blogpost wrote (Linett 2008). We will discuss this inherent dilemma later in the article.

#### PARTICIPATORY CULTURE IN MUSEUMS

Engaging people from the outside into museum work is not new. Museums have involved external people in variations of dialogue since the dawn of the modern museums, especially in the field of collection management, where objects, histories and documentation have been collected in cooperation with informants outside the museum through interviews, talks or oth-

er forms of personal communication. This kind of cooperation is usually connected to collection management, and with the purpose of getting particular information for the museum archives. Museums have used external expertise also in exhibition work, and museum curators have always had a network of informants at hand. This old style relationship between museum and community are project-based, and answers to needs museums have. The defining voice is always that of the museum, and the role of "the other" is usually to help the museum professional.

Museum professionals and researchers are describing the practice of engaging with the audience in different ways and with different words: Engagement, involvement, participation are concepts that all describe a form of cooperation between museum and groups outside (Krankenhagen 2013). The methods used are often dialogue, co-creation or other forms of cooperation towards a goal. "The people outside the museum" are in this context what we usually call "the audience". As the museum innovator Jim Richardson recently pointed out in a blogpost, audience is a word

that does not cover the modern museum consumer: *“These are people who live increasingly digital lives, where they are not spectators, but active participants, positively engaged through outreach programs and projects.”* (Richardson 2015). And he suggests, albeit the word audience still is meaningful in our field of work, that it would be useful to think of the groups we are entering into co-operation with as participants.

## THE CASE

Our case study started with an aspiration to experiment with involvement with different target groups very early in a planning process. The plan we were working on, was supposed to explore how a traditional open-air museum could present local history to a greater variety of audiences than before. We put the theory to the test in the planning phase of a refurbishing process in the open-air museum Sverresborg.

Sverresborg Trøndelag Folk Museum is a more than 100-year-old open-air museum, with approximately 100 vintage buildings and a relatively new indoor ex-

hibition area. In many ways, the museum is limited by the mass of buildings replanted in an idyllic area near the city of Trondheim. The mere concept of open-air museum and folk museum has a scent of mothballs to it. Making the past relevant to people of today is not always straightforward in this context, but at Sverresborg, they are actively seeking ways of reaching new groups of visitors: younger generations, migrants and immigrants from different parts of the world. Despite its age and long tradition, Sverresborg appears as a modern museum, with innovative outreach activities and educational programmes. The museum has in recent years worked with educational projects against sexual abuse, victims of war, and a new museum venue for Deaf history and culture. This has mainly been either projects that take place outside the museum, or short term programs with no link to the vintage buildings, collections or to the open-air museum as a whole. A comprehensive process of re-planning the 'Old Town' (an outdoor area with historical town houses) was started in 2010. Based on a need to reflect something more than a static imagined past, one

of the ideas was to make environmental history the main theme for the Old Town in the museum. The dialogue project we present here was carried out as a pre-project in this re-planning process; primarily we wanted to study dialogue as part of a museum planning practice. A bonus outcome would be to learn how different groups of museum users reacted to the thought of making urban environmental history a structuring perspective in the traditional folk museum. We anticipated that some of the traditional museum visitors would find this a controversial issue at the museum, while we expected it would make the museum more relevant and interesting for young, non-visitors to the museum.

## THE DIALOGUE PARTNERS

The first group we met with, were representatives from 'Nature and Youth' (Natur og Ungdom – NU), a large Norwegian environmentalist youth organization. We selected this group due to their interest in and work for environmental issues. Three young peo-

ple (two female, one male, 15-19 years old) joined us as representatives of this NGO.

The second group were members of the 'Friends of the museum', (FOM) a group of people who volunteer in the museum during their leisure time. The six attendees in the age of 50 to 80, joined as individual members of a group.

The third group were from ISAK, a local cultural centre for young people in Trondheim. We invited them to visit us at the museum and discuss the project with us. Three boys and one girl between 15-18 years old accepted our invitation.

## THE MEETINGS

All meetings took place after opening hours in a meeting room at the museum. The meetings were divided into two parts. First, a conversation/discussion in more or less formalised setting. This was followed by a visit in the museums' exhibition called "Fragments of life" (Livsbilder), to look especially at one part of the exhibition called "The Kitchen Revolution"

(Kjøkkenrevolusjonen). We chose this part of the exhibition because it is easy to implement the theme environmental history in the analyses of the exhibition, and the materiality of the kitchen is something most people can relate to. After pitching our idea of introducing environmental history as a theme for the outdoor area in the museum, we asked the participants to point out what they would regard as positive elements of the proposed project. Secondly, we asked them to reflect further on the idea of environmental history at the traditional open-air museum, and finally, they we asked the groups to criticize and comment freely on the project. In the next part, where we visited the exhibition, we continued discussing whether and how to implement environmental history and environmental issues to the museum, this time face-to-face with museum objects and exhibition spaces.

We used different designs for the meetings with the three groups. All were inspired by the central ideas of Freire and Habermas that all should be heard, no one excluded. As far as possible, we worked from the ideal position that all have equal power to question

the ideas and justifications of others and to ask questions; all are equal in making a decision and reaching a conclusion. Coercion is excluded and the only power exercised is the power of the most reasonable argument (Habermas 1984: 99).

The dialogue designs were further oriented towards the characteristics of the different groups, their anticipated relations and attitudes towards the museum, the groups respective expertise as well as our expectations on what the groups could contribute to the topic. Although we had the dialogue designs planned, we kept the designs open in order to react to the dynamics of the meetings.

We chose the highly structured method of ideation for the young people from 'Nature and Youth', knowing that they, through their organizational work, are familiar with the methods, logics and language, something a member of the group confirmed: "*We have absolutely been into ideation techniques. That is something we use all the time, but without being aware that it can be used as a method. Well, from this perspective, it is something we practise.*" (NU2) All members of

this group acted more or less in the same way in the dialogue setting. They took turns in talking, addressing the museum employees, referring to the subject of the meeting, expressing agreement and opinion.

In the case of the Friends of the Museum, we chose the "coffee-table design" to give less structure to the meeting. While the meeting with NU took character of a work meeting, the coffee table atmosphere of the meeting with the Friends of the museum referred back to leisure time: Armed with a homemade apple cake we gathered around a coffee table. We introduced the project idea of environmental history with emphasis on involving different groups in an early stage of the museum's planning process. The only structuring element to the meeting was a short welcome and introduction from the museum employee and questions we had printed on a sheet of paper. The participants could refer to these questions in case the conversation stopped. During the entire meeting, only one person referred to questions on the paper. This meeting can be described as semi-structured. We observed variations on how individuals adopted

to the situation: While some stuck to the topic, others used the forum to tell anecdotes and share personal memories. At one point, the discussion in front of the kitchen revolution exhibit went all the way from one participant remembering how little waste was produced in a 1940's-household because everything was re-used or given to animals, to reflections on "*the amount of diapers used by one child today!*" (FOM3). Choosing a more open dialogue-design, made it possible for people to share memories, knowledge, questions, convictions and uncertainties, wishes and fears in a friendly atmosphere and after their own preferences. It also opened for digression and contributions off topic. There were many ideas on the museum, its future development and environmental history perspectives, but we also spent much time on personal memories, what the museum and city used to be like, and anecdotes only peripherally related to the theme of the meeting.

The last group from ISAK (3 boys and 1 girl from the local cultural centre) were the most challenging. We engaged in a dialogue-design that was oriented to-

wards the ideas of co-creation. Co-creation indicates that museum employees together with the young people would create something new together. This group are familiar and trained in this kind of thinking through their use of social media and their work at the culture centre. As a starting point for the discussion, we formulated what we regarded as our challenge: To attract young people to visit the museum. In order not to influence the stream of ideas, or the elaborating shared topics of relevance from scratch, we did not introduce the idea of environmental history at this point. After posing the question: How can the museum become more relevant for young people? we stepped back and opened the floor to ideas, questions and propositions from the young people. Later we went to the exhibition. While visiting the 'Kitchen Revolution' exhibition, the young people engaged in creative, for us unforeseen ways, with the objects and installations at hand. They played on the children's playground, enacted film scenes and posed in front of objects and installations.

In comparison to the two first meetings, we left this

last meeting more or less empty-handed with regards to environmental history in the museum. As one of the participants put it, environmental history is "*before there were trees, now there are buildings*" (ISAK1) with little to add to that. The youngsters jumped from one idea to another, and often they made insider references and jokes. Even though the atmosphere was friendly and filled with laughter, we often did not understand what they referred to, or could hardly follow their associations and ideas. The conversation temporarily made us spectators instead of participants. The impression of us being forced into the position of a passive receiving audience and the young people actively producing ideas, was put to the point by some rounding up-words a boy formulated at the end of the meeting: "*Well, I'd say we go for some kind of event organized by ISAK and some promoting/marketing in the fore run.*" And he continued: "*Do you think you have gotten something to start with from this meeting?*" (ISAK 2) Not only did he plan the future activities of the museum; he also put himself in position of the host of our dialogical encounter by initiating an eval-

uation of the meeting.

**Meeting Nature and Youth (NU): "Museums are supposed to show knowledge, not opinions"**

The members of NU accepted and confirmed the museum as an institution that conveys objective, neutral knowledge: "*The museum is not supposed to decide what you mean, but it should be a provider of knowledge.*" (NU1). "*They [museums] are supposed to show knowledge, not political opinions.*" (NU2). In these examples, the authority assigned to the museum is based on neutral historical scholarship and expertise. By awarding dissemination functions to the museum, the young people also implicitly agreed on the role of the museum as a learning institution, thereby confirming relevance to the museum and its exhibitions. Submitting to the rules of communication as introduced by us, met no resistance because the rational, workshop character of the dialogue further alluded to the image of a neutral, objective way of communication. Another proof that this group ascribes authority to the institution, and consequentially to us as representatives of the institution is the observation that

they primarily addressed us when speaking. They seldom addressed each other or engaged in sideways conversations. Their behaviour differs here from the Friends of the Museum and the members of ISAK. While the Friends of the Museum addressed both us and members of their own group, the young people from ISAK engaged from time to time in parallel conversations where they used insider knowledge and referred to points of reference we were not familiar with. The young people from Nature and Youth not only played along with the established rules of the dialogue-design at hand, they also actively emphasized agreement. Asked to first comment on the positive aspects of the proposed project one answered:

*"I think, I... in a way, do very much agree with the overview you have made, with all the pros and cons. Very much at one with that. And so, I think what is very, very good with the project is that it is about an up-to-date issue [...]"* (NU1)

The established dialogue continued in the exhibition. Leaving the workshop atmosphere of the meet-

ing room, the young people more freely associated the topics discussed in the meeting room to the objects on display. We did not use structuring elements for our dialogue/exchange of ideas in this part. Even so, also in this part of the meeting, there was a high degree of consensus, engagement and focus on the subject of discussion; all utterances were linked to the subject of environmental history at the museum. The museum objects were only regarded as symbols for contemporary issues. The objects themselves had little value for this group, there was little recognition (contrary to what we experienced with the Friends of the museum's encounter with the exhibition) or historical interest on how the people lived in the old days. What dominated when the young people from Nature and Youth encountered the objects was a search for connections between objects at display and environmental issues:

*“There is, in a way, the story about the public bathing houses where people went to wash themselves, and then, one had many of these large bowls for washing. And today – I cannot cope with*

*not having a shower every day. That is just crazy!”*  
(NU1)

*“Yes, think about how much water is used today ... compared... a very simple sign could be displayed here, just showing the amount of water used by an average family today compared to the time before.”*  
(NU1)

With the young people from ‘Nature and Youth,’ we were on the same level: They were interested in a good working atmosphere because they take the subject (environmental issues) seriously, and engage in dialogue with us in order to develop a museum product which can contribute to public awareness on environmental issues, and eventually change the world to the better.

**Meeting Friends of the Museum (FOM): “... look at the past and a possible future simultaneously”**

Compared to the young people from NU, the elderly Friends of the museum assign an even more comprehensive function to the museum. For them the duty of the museum is to go beyond the presentation of

facts and includes offering orientation for today or the future. Asked about the purposes of the museum, apart from being a place for recreation, something this group underpins by their utterances and the way they use the museum, FOM1 answers: *“It’s the cultural history part also. And in a museum, there should be dissemination activities, the society as it used to be”*. A second member of the group further explained:

*“I think it is crucial that we in the centre of Trøndelag [the name of the region] link the city and the countryside and that we shape understanding for what happens both inside the city and in the countryside. That is the background for what happens today. That we do not only look backwards, but that we sort of look at the past and a possible future simultaneously. And that must be an important task for a museum.”* (FOM2)

Unlike the NU-group, Friends of the Museum seemed to be emotionally connected to the museum and feel ownership to the museum, partly because they have a long history of visiting the museum, and

doing voluntary work in the museum. FOM members ascribe authority to the museum not only based on the dissemination role of the museum. Even stronger they emphasize the obligation to preserve and disseminate local and regional history as a goal in itself and a part in local identity formation. One member of the group expressed that he was *“...proud to have something like this [the folk museum] in our midst”* (FOM2) Another participant explained:

*“When we look at the dialects which are spoken in the city and around our table here, it is obvious that not all of us come from Trondheim. Most of us come from villages nearby, and at the same time as they wish to be a part of their local community, they wish to keep a connection to where they come from. This, I think, is a very good assignment for the museum.”* (FOM3)

While for the friends of the museum, local history and its representations are part of caring for the community, for the young people the connection to the local is a way to attract interest in more global envi-

ronmental questions:

*“I have the impression that, whenever I try to convince a person to become interested in the environment or to ‘think green’ or something like that, when I want to discuss environmental issues, it is always the local issues which is most relevant, which awake interest, like e.g. public transport in Trondheim [...] I think that is important, nearness is important, both closeness to the topic and nearness to history.”* (NU1)

The reasons for the individual members of FOM to attend our meeting were mixed. On one hand they wanted to take part in and contribute to the planning process, on the other hand, engaging in dialogue was a step in building and maintaining individual relations between the members of the group and memory- and identification work face to face with historical objects. After being finished with our meeting, they will go on meeting each other and working voluntarily with each other. Group dynamics as we experienced them during the meeting have developed through earlier

encounters, interaction and will develop in the future.

We had expected more opposition from the FOM with concerns to a potential controversial topic as environmental history at a folk museum. However, this group took the idea and incorporated it into their view of what a museum should be without any hesitation. They even elaborated the idea further by widening the local-regional context with a global perspective and the temporal perspective by opening for representations of today: *“Not only this 19th century stuff”*. (FOM2) They also came up with possibilities for thinking children into the exhibition or using the museum for untraditional purposes like open-air concerts.

Meeting ISAK: *“I’m not interested in the past, I only look forward.”* For the young people from ISAK, history is of no relevance, museums are nothing more than fossils from a past time, and do not play a role in their lives, or as one member of the group put it: *“Museums are boring. And folk museums are even more boring.”* (ISAK2) Another member of the group hushed the one who had uttered this opinion, and he replied

by addressing us: *“Sorry, but you said you wanted to hear the truth.”* (ISAK2) This little piece of conversation mirrors the dynamics and changes of role that can evolve while engaging in free, open dialogue. Depriving the institution from its relevance, use and value and thereby stripping us as representatives of the museum of any form of authority, opened for a new relation between the young people from ISAK and us. While they changed from informants, that were asked to help us to fulfil a project (framed by our expectations and the communication rules given by us) to dominate the discussion, we changed from the ones taking initiative and leading the meeting to those who felt like their existence was put to discussion. The young people were the key to a world we wanted to reach out to, while we had nothing interesting to offer them. Where we expected climate change, sustainable development and consequently environmental history to be at least of some interest to young people, we learnt that this was ‘nerdy’: Unless there was imminent danger of a major catastrophe (preferably in their own city) caused by climate change, it was

of little or no relevance to this group. Implicitly they gave the nerd-status also to the museum: *“Young people like to brag about their interest in different topics, especially when it comes to the environment, so maybe some would visit an exhibition about environmental history just to be able to say: ‘I’ve been there!’”* (ISAK1)

The ISAK youngsters engaged in private conversations among themselves, with us as silent listeners. In the few references they made to the environmental topic of the meeting, they referred to Al Gore’s film ‘An Inconvenient Truth’, a reality TV show called ‘Farmen’ or proposed to hire John Cleese to parody our excessive use of packaging material. We found it difficult to bring the dialogue back to the topic we were interested in without coming into conflict with our ideas on equality, democracy, openness and the will to change as important characteristics of dialogue. Instead of referring to history or environment, the communicative channels the young people picked, came from music, film, entertainment, or fashion. The museum/exhibition served as a playground for identification strategies – enacting film scenes, ascribing

attributes to pictures of people in the exhibition: He is a typical hipster.... Oh, look, these old people look like vampires. But the exhibitions also reflected something in their own identity: “*You are somehow a 60’s person, whereas I am rather a 70’s person.*” (ISAK2) To the young people from ISAK, the most prominent motivation for engaging in the dialogue seemed to be as a forum for discussing and negotiating identities.

#### WHAT HAPPENED TO MUSEUM AUTHORITY?

The museums’ authority is traditionally based on the assumption that museums are apolitical holders of knowledge and truth (Cameron 2007:330-342). Today there is a blurring of roles between expertise and authorship. People bring along presumptions, earlier experiences and expectations when encountering the museum. And they engage actively with content they meet in the museum. Individual predispositions’ importance for museum experiences are well established in research on learning in museum (Hein 2011; Falk,

Dierking and Adams 2011), and point in the direction of a reduced control over individual’s experiences and learning outcomes when visiting a museum. However, the museum makes the initial decision on programming and what is to be displayed in exhibitions.

Inviting people from outside into a planning process in the museum, means to take the idea of dialogue to the core of the institution. To many museum professionals this new relationship to the public is frightening. What about integrity of collections, what about trustworthiness, and what about the Truth if we let go of our control? “If the museum isn’t in control, how can it thrive?” is museum blogger and author Nina Simon’s rhetoric question, echoing many anxious museum expert (Simon 2008). This anxiety may be based on misgivings about the concepts used in the new museum paradigm. The possibilities and limitations of concepts such as participation and dialogue are not always conveyed to museum practitioners. Studies on museum practice are characterized by a distance between museum practitioners, and those

who study and analyse the process. Those working in the museum seldom read papers, articles and books produced by the researchers, experiences and discussions among museum practitioners are not reflected in the research. Museum workers are not used to, and rarely gets the possibility to reflect on the programs they conduct, neither during the project phase nor afterwards (Lynch 2009).

How open and non-coercive, how equally were power distributed in our study? Did the museum expert at any point dominate the discussion? Yes we did. That became obvious when we visited the exhibition and were face to face with the objects. The museum authority came to the front in the meeting with the youths from ISAK, since they were the most inquisitive, asking questions about the objects, what they were and why they were in the exhibition. The museum worker became quite eager to tell about the objects, to use her knowledge and expertise about the different objects and the stories behind. What happened next however was not what we usually experience when we give visitors a tour in the exhibition. In

many cases the youngsters from ISAK took the information and turned it into something else, they told us a different story, gave it a different set of references – references from their own life. Some very serious old people in a picture from the early 1900’s became vampires. The exhibited tram became a background for playing out scenes from the film Titanic. A display of posters from the youth culture of the -70’s made them reflect on their own position in today’s youth culture. In a part of the exhibition, that has form of a playground for children, the interactivity again took on the form of identity play, using personas from the exhibition in addition to references to popular films and TV-series.<sup>4</sup> The museum worker lost control. And was happy to do so. It struck us that this was what museums should be about: offering information and stories so that can be made relevant by the audience, the visitors, and the participants. All of a sudden, the group started to work on one of the main questions we had posed to them initially: How to make museums relevant and attractive for young people: While dismissing the idea of environment history, they in-

stead made plans for an exhibition of prototypes in youth culture, an identity play based on the objects and photos in the existing exhibition: “*Here is a hipster, this is an arch-hipster, and hippies, and freaks*”, and made it clear that this was what they would like to see in a new exhibition at the museum. “*Here is your new exhibition*”, the group concluded.

It is obvious that the museum workers learnt something from this dialogue meeting. But did the youngsters from ISAK learn anything? Our impression is that they indeed got a new view of the museum. When they arrived, they had a very negative attitude towards museums as dusty and boring places they have not been to since they were small children. This changed quite dramatically when we entered the exhibition area: “*Wow! This was different from what I remember! Oh, look at that! Are these really old objects sort of? Cool! Oh Shit! Look at that silver jewellery!*” As a parting comment, they stated that they would come back the next week. They wanted to look at the whole museum, and they wanted to bring a camera to take picture of the special objects that made such impres-

sion on themselves. They wanted to tell their mates about the experience. To us that is a great result.

As the meeting with ISAK showed, there is no dichotomy between having authority as a museum institution, and engaging in free and open dialogue. We follow Nina Simon when she says: “Content expertise matters. Content control shouldn’t.” (Simon 2008). This expertise is still necessary for a museum to fulfil its role as places of education, and it gives an authority based on knowledge not on control.

#### THE OUTCOME OF THE STUDY

A museum that engages in dialogue with audiences must be open for changing its positions during the dialogical engagement. Perhaps even more challenging, the museums would have to find a way to deal with the openness and unpredictability of the dialogical encounter. While there was a great deal of agreement between ‘Nature and Youth’, the ‘Friends of the Museum’ and us on the importance and relevance of bringing environmental issues on display in a folk

museum, the young people from ISAK neglected the relevance not only of the environmental issues, but also of the museum itself. We were not able to come to a shared understanding of relevant topics for a museum. In addition, we met limitations to how far the museum can go to accommodate our dialogue partners’ visions, without losing identity, purpose and legitimacy of the museum.

We did not gain information about environmental history in the museum as we had anticipated, but we had built relations to two groups of non-visitors (NU and ISAK), which might prove important and relevant in the future development of programmes and exhibitions in the museum. In addition, we had established another type of relation to our Friends of the museums group. Had the project ever come out of the drawing board, this group could have been valuable participant in the process towards a new interpretation of the old town in the museum.

One interesting outcome of the meetings was the changing roles of authority and how these shaped and were shaped by different expectations and attitudes

towards the museum, as well as by different ‘communicative purposes in dialogue’ (Burbules 2007:520). Even though we initiated the dialogue meetings, and we made the designs for the meetings, the dynamics of the dialogue developed in unforeseen ways. How far we agreed on the basic convictions (history is relevant, environmental issues are important) and how structured the meeting was, influenced the degree of content-related output of the meetings. On the other hand, the more diverging attitudes and references were brought to the meeting by the different participants, and the less structure we imposed on the meetings, the more new and unexpected knowledge and experiences were elaborated. The specific predispositions our dialogue partners brought to the table, have an impact on the dialogue encounter. Likewise, our presumptions of the different groups’ attitudes towards the museum mirror the ways we conceptualized the dialogue-meetings. In our material, the outcome with regards to content – development and input in the planning process – seems to be dependent on the degree of agreement between the external

groups and us on how we understand the museum's role, and prior knowledge of both the topic and the museum.

Based on our material we follow Burbules' description of what he considers as the most worthwhile results of a dialogical encounter. As mentioned above, Burbules emphasizes the dynamic character of dialogue. More than looking for positivistic outcome of the dialogue, he focuses on the process of give and take inherent in dialogue engagement. According to Burbules, dialogue does not necessarily lead to new rational knowledge, it can also lead to amazement and uncertainty, which again leads to an opportunity to ask new questions. A boy from ISAK put one fundamental question forward: "*Does everything we find in the museum have to have some sort of historical context?*". (ISAK1) At second thought, we realized that this is actually a core question for the museum and the museum planning process (and most certainly a question that would be answered differently by

the different departments of our museum): Where do we put our focus in the museum work concerning the museums future development? In collecting and preserving buildings, objects and stories from the past, or in making them relevant for the present society? The dialogue meeting we had in this small study, made us reflect on some fundamental questions as to what is the purpose of museums.

If we were to sum up our experience during this study, we want to stress the important of openness. Before an involvement process, the museum workers must discuss the implications of inviting people to be participators, rather than audience with their colleagues. We have to find out what engagement means in each case, and what if any, risk it might pose and challenges we may meet. The reason why we want to involve the community in museum work must be discussed in each case, as it will vary, so will the methods we chose, depending of who takes part in the dialogue.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> These comments were made in meetings presenting this project to colleagues and larger group of museum workers.

<sup>2</sup> The project never got out of the pre-planning phase, and the only result was an internal project note. A full study of a complete involvement process would be necessary to conclude about the possible outcome of the dialogical approach.

<sup>3</sup> NOU 1996:7; p.38. See also St.meld. nr. 22 (1999-2000) and St.meld. nr. 48 (2002-2003)

<sup>4</sup> In the audio recording from this part of the dialogue meeting, it is impossible to distinguish one voice from the other. Sometimes they talk simultaneously, sometimes there are shouting from the distance as they disappeared into the labyrinth of the exhibition. Sometimes there is just an outburst of laughter to be heard. Often the laughter belongs to the museum workers.

<sup>5</sup> Burbles 2007

## The dialogue meetings at Sverresborg Trøndelag Folkemuseum, Trondheim:

15.06.2011 Friends of the Museum – FOM. Trøndelag Folkemuseums venner. Six participants. (FOM1-6)

21.06.2011 ISAK – Youth Culture Centre, Trondheim. Three participants (ISAK1-3)

26.06.2011 Nature and Youth –NU. Natur og Ungdom, Trondheim. Three participants (NU1-3)

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# THE DIALOGIC INTERVIEW: USING INTERVIEW TO GENERATE INTEREST IN LOCAL HISTORY

*Insa Müller*

## ABSTRACT

Det dialogiske intervju: Å bruke intervju til å skape engasjement for lokalhistorie.

Artikkelen tar utgangspunkt i lokalsamfunnet på den norske øya Hitra. På Hitra medfører arbeidsmigrasjon store forandringer i den demografiske sammensetningen. I dag er 15% av øyas befolkning utlendinger, de meste arbeidsmigranter fra østeuropeiske land. Lokalmuseet på Hitra gjennomførte intervjuer i forbindelse med et samtidsdokumentasjonsprosjekt. Dette prosjektet skal sikre at arbeidsmigrantenes erfaringer og historier er representert i museets arkiver,

samtidig som intervjuene skulle brukes til å lage en utstilling.

Artikkelen fokuserer på måten intervjuene ble gjennomført. Denne var inspirert av teorier om historiebevissthet og dialog. Hovedtrekk ved begge konseptene blir presentert i artikkelen, samt en beskrivelse av de 'dialogiske intervjuene'. Artikkelen analyserer intervjuprosessen for å finne hvordan den bidro til a) å gjøre lokalhistorie relevant samtidig som de tilrettela og muliggjorde historisk læring, b) identitetsarbeid og c) gi rom til det uforventede.

Artikkelen konkluderer ved å argumentere for at metoden ‘dialogiske intervju’, gir små lokalhistoriske museer anledning til å etablere dypere og mer likeverdige relasjoner til nye (ikke-)besøkendegrupper. Me-

toden bidrar dessuten til interkulturell forståelse, og ikke minst bidrar den til å gi lokalhistoriske museer et redskap for å gjøre lokalhistorie relevant i et samfunn preget av migrasjon og rask forandring.

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## INTRODUCTION

A major feature of today’s world is a high degree of mobility and a rapidly increasing transnational migration. This situation poses serious challenges also to museums’ traditional roles and working methods. Today museums are expected to reflect “the socio-cultural implications of such changes and the increasingly plural face of the populations composing modern states” (Gouriévidis 2014:1) As a reaction to this, museums in several European countries have engaged with the history of migration in exhibitions and projects<sup>1</sup>, specialized<sup>2</sup> museums have opened, and city museums in larger European cities have addressed immigration as part of their cities’ history<sup>3</sup>. However and despite a growing body of research on migration

and museums<sup>4</sup>, little light has been shed on how small local history museums adjust to demographic changes in their local community. Even though migration is a global phenomenon, its occurrences differ fundamentally: On the coast of Mid-Norway, immigration is above all connected to the fish-farming industry and labor immigration from Eastern European countries.

This article takes the island of Hitra as its case and aims at contributing to developing practical methods that help small museums to establish social relations with members of local immigrant groups. Another aim is to be able to incorporate their voices into museum practices such as documentation and exhibitions. During documentation (or in preparation of exhibitions), museums often undertake interviews

with members of minority communities. In many cases, these interviews are the only contact between the museum and representatives of minority groups<sup>5</sup>. Taking this observation as its vantage point, the article argues that interviews can be re-conceptualized from a pure knowledge and information-gathering method applied during documentation, into what can be described as a dialogic museum practice or an inclusive museum method. Doing so, interviews offer benefits for both the museum and individual minority group members involved.

#### THE CASE: THE LOCAL COMMUNITY OF HITRA

Hitra is an island and a coastal municipality in the middle of Norway with approximately 4,500 inhabitants. The municipality of Hitra spans over 650 sqm. Traditionally, the people of Hitra relied on fishing and small-scale farming for their existence. The area was characterized by a very homogenous community and large emigration numbers during the last century

with a notable dip in population from the 1960s. The situation has changed dramatically during the last ten years: As a result of the growth of aquaculture, fish farming and jobs that this type of industry generates, Hitra's population is currently growing<sup>6</sup>. Today, approx. 15% of the population is composed of labor migrants from Eastern European countries.

As in similar communities, in Hitra, we observe an increase in diversity in terms of who constitutes the local community. At first sight, Hitra's residents can be divided into two main groups—"Hitterværing" ('people of Hitra' / long-time inhabitants) and immigrants – but these categories are not stable. Community cohesion and group identity are under constant negotiation (Delanty 2003). While Norwegians regard working migrants as one group, immigrants from Romania distance themselves from immigrants from Poland and vice versa. Also, more remarkable, after a couple of years, immigrants to Hitra distance themselves from immigrants living on the neighbour island of Frøya which is experiencing a similar economic and demographic transformation. When in

contact with 'Frøyværing' (people of Frøya), being 'from' Hitra connects Norwegians and immigrants more than being from different countries disunites them. An example to illustrate this point is that our Romanian contacts told us they did not have any contact with Romanians living on the neighbor island. Another example is a German couple that shared with us the conviction that they saw differences between the inhabitants on the two islands. They identified with the people on their island and could not imagine to live or work on the neighbor island due to negative traits of character.

Today's diverse local community is not part of the traditional representations of local history in Hitra. In Hitra's case, an unambiguous narrative of linear development from a self-sustaining fishing community, whose willingness to take chances eventually led to the success of aquaculture and to the immense growth of wealth on the island, is the dominant interpretation of past developments. This major narrative can be observed in various places. In its main exhibition on Fillan, The Coastal Museum shows the hardship

of living in Hitra ca. 1920 in its permanent exhibition while at the new established Coast express terminal building in Sandstad (Hitra), the 'havbruksutstilling' (aquaculture exhibition) tells the success story of fish-farming in the region. The above mentioned accounts are influential because they offer raw-material and orientation for identity formation<sup>7</sup>. In addition, they contribute to building a boundary between long-term inhabitants and immigrants, as people who are new to the community do not partake in a 'collective memory' (Halbwachs 1992) with native inhabitants. Language use reinforces this effect since the exhibition at the Coastal Museum is texted in Norwegian, English and German while the aquaculture exhibition is in Norwegian and English. Therefore, new citizens are not represented in the stories told, nor are they addressed as audience or invited to contribute, to ask questions or to discuss standard interpretations of the local past. Although the narrative of Hitra from fishing to aquaculture has been acceptable for a relatively homogeneous culture, it currently poses "obstacles to the negotiation of inter-group relations and adapta-

tion to rapid change that characterize postmodern global culture” (Seixas 2004:15).

### NEW ROLES FOR THE LOCAL HISTORY MUSEUM

The people of Hitra currently find themselves in a situation that is far too different, complex and unstable to be perceived as the causal result of an unambiguous historical process. Most of the people of Hitra are no longer familiar with the traditional way of living and the associated fishing techniques, fishing equipment or the societal and cultural context. Hence, objects as well as stories connected to historical objects lose their ability to speak to today’s “Hitterværingar” – both with Norwegian and foreign origin.

If conveying a shared (nevertheless almost forgotten) history results in a loss of relevance, then a small local history museum must rethink its role within the community. In a 2006 study, Lynda Kelly reports that the most important purpose for small local museums is not to convey knowledge or to represent an ‘official’

history of an area; rather, “the value of local museums were the links back to community” (Kelly 2006:4). Kelly identifies these links as relevancy to local areas, thus contributing to developing a sense of belonging and involvement and to developing social and community networks across cultures and generations. Similarly, Graham Black determines that the incorporation of local community voices and life experiences is important and that “through enabling communities to discover their area’s past, and its relevance to the present, the museum should also reveal to local people and communities the importance of having an active role in decision-making for the future” (Black 2010:130). Although Black emphasizes the links between the past and the present, his description of a history museum still excludes the voices of newcomers since they did not take part in the area’s past.

In recent times, immigrants to major cities have increasingly been acknowledged as members of each city’s history in Norway<sup>8</sup> (and Western Europe). However migrants to Hitra have only just begun to settle in the area, and no one (not even all of the migrants

themselves) is certain how long they will remain in the area. Some have decided to stay, attended Norwegian language courses and bought houses. Others work hard in shorter periods of time and send money home to their families, planning to go back to their home countries eventually.

If we consider that the prominent purposes of the museum include assisting people in making sense of the area’s past and/or their own pasts by supporting the people in building their identities and contributing to communication in a heterogeneous community (Crooke 2008:15), then the historical experiences of those who are new to the area must find a means of expression that is equal to those who have ‘always’ lived in the area. To achieve this aim, museum practice in Hitra worked on finding a way to communicate about (or with the assistance of) history in a manner that invites members of different groups to participate equally. Because group structures are fluid and complex, an individual approach is necessary. In the following section, I will outline how individual conversations inspired by the concepts of histori-

cal consciousness and dialogue can serve as starting points in the development of an inclusive approach to negotiations of local history and belonging to a local community.

### HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Historical consciousness is widely discussed and conceptually elaborated in the field of history didactics (Jensen 2012; Seixas 2004). However, the concept has surprisingly received little attention in the Scandinavian literature related to museum studies. Basically, historical consciousness focuses on the process of how humans make sense of the past: “More than pure knowledge about or interest in history, historical consciousness encompasses the correlation between interpretations of the past, understanding of our present lives and perspectives about what the future holds for us” (Jeismann 1997:42) [my transl.].

Although humans use history to orient themselves today, they also actively shape the present as their past in the future. In many ways, these features

of historical consciousness share fundamental dimensions with the institution of the museum. As the museum collects and safeguards objects from the past and present day for current and future generations. Hence, the museum stands out as well suited to reflect and discuss not only history, but also different interpretations of history as well as the current situation and a shared future.

Another characteristic of historical consciousness is that it is developed through social and cultural interactions (Jensen 2012:25). In the case of local history narratives, historical consciousness is (therefore) necessarily involved in the intersection of personal memories, oral traditions, and academic research. As previously noted, interpretative authority over local history is under negotiation. The concept of historical consciousness corresponds with this, as it is according to Jensen, not a knowledge you acquire by reading, but rather a state of mind and a capacity that can be trained and that finally “[...] should aim at turning them [people, my remark] into more insightful, responsible, more innovative and reflective,

more critical and creative users of the historical consciousness they already possess.” [my transl.] (Jensen 2012:29) Historical consciousness does not only help individuals to make sense of their world, at the same time it helps to understand other people’s interpretations of the past and views on the present. If the museum seeks to offer relevant museum experiences to members of different groups, this will demand that we know something about different groups and individuals’ historical consciousness. This can only happen through exchanging knowledge about each other - through speaking to each other. Talking to each other, asking each other questions, leads over to a second essential concept, namely ‘dialogue’.

## D I A L O G U E

The term ‘dialogue’ is frequently used when discussing museums today. There are many ways to define and implement dialogue in museum practice, ranging from dialogue as the pressing of buttons in interactive installations to the comprehensive idea of the muse-

um as a ‘dialogue institution’ that can be found in the Norwegian Parliament White papers (NOU 1996:7).

In the context of implementing interviews into museum practice, dialogue is a synonym for ‘engagement’. The emphasis is on mutuality. Freire uses the term ‘dialogue’ to describe face-to-face interaction between equal partners, a process of a shared inquiry with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding that subsequently leads to change. (Freire 1997:110) Accordingly, participating in dialogue demands real discussion partners, that is, people who listen and respond. Mutuality does not stop after an interview session has ended; rather, it is implied that both partners are open to the possibility of change once the interaction has concluded. Openness in terms of a conversations’ outcome represents one first fundamental difference to traditional roles during interviews. While during an interview as part of documentation one person asks questions while the other answers to these questions, in a dialogic interview questions and answers go both ways. During a dialogic interview the interviewer does not stick to a pre-defined

interview-guide and thus avoids to set limits or domesticate the flow of ideas, thoughts and utterances. Outcomes and things said during a dialogic interview also have an impact on later interviews. The interviewer might have gained new knowledge, has new questions, was suggested new perspectives or topics that he or she wishes to follow up on in following interviews.

In addition to mutuality, a second important aspect of ‘dialogue’ is that it must be free from power or domination to the greatest extent possible. Jürgen Habermas’ ‘public sphere’ and ‘communicative action’ (Habermas 1962; 1984) are relevant theories with respect to the idea of the museum as an institution that contributes to democratic practice and civic engagement (Barrett 2011). Despite the ambition of a dialogue free from oppression, in both the traditional interview and ordinary museum settings, power certainly plays a role – primarily when the interviewer assumes an active role by controlling the conversation or when a curator selects story lines for an exhibition. A focus on dialogue therefore demands that per-

spectives, opinions and interpretations be exchanged rather than censored or averted in an interview (cf. above).

A third important perspective is that dialogue is not a neutral communicative process but a situated practice. Dialogue, like an interview, always occurs in a specific situation and hence is influenced by the particulars of who, when, where and how the dialogue occurs (Burbules and Bruce, not dated: 518-519). Engaging in dialogue can be regarded as an action, a practice – something both interlocutors actively do. In our interviews, especially the question of who took part turned out to be of great importance. This will be explained in greater detail below.

## CONDUCTING DIALOGIC INTERVIEWS

In the summer of 2015, we conducted five interviews with 7 informants (three women, four men). All of our informants came from Eastern European countries (Romania, Poland, Lithuania) and with the ex-

ception of one, all worked in fish-processing factories. Initial contact was established through sending letters to possible interview partners, who were suggested to us by locals. In these letters we introduced the project – an exhibition on how working immigration has changed the local community through the lenses of both long-time residents and newcomers to the island. Also we emphasized how important it was for us, to make marginalized voices heard in the exhibition and how crucial individual's experiences and knowledge would be for the overall success of the project. Astonishingly all of those we asked to participate agreed to meet with us.

While we were very aware of and conscious about our expectations towards the interviews, we were ignorant about informants' motivations to participate. Research has shown that 'subjective interests' persuade people to agree to participate in an interview. Clark described curiosity, enjoyment, individual empowerment, introspective interest, social comparison, therapeutic interest, material interest, economic interest, representation, political empowerment and

a wish to inform change as reasons why individuals decide to participate in interviews (Clark 2010).

Considering interlocutors motives for involving in a conversation is a first step in acknowledging conversation partners' agency – a constitutive feature for dialogue. The people we spoke to during the interviews had reasons for talking to us, they were active, independent, self-determined and often, they wished to convey a message. One informant stressed several times during our conversation that Hitra's population was little welcoming to immigrants, and that the municipality did not do enough to integrate newcomers.

Not only participant's inner motivations influenced the interview, but social contexts had an impact on the interview process. Silverman used the expression 'interview society' (Silvermann 1993) to describe that we live in a society where everybody is familiar with interviews, everybody holds a clear understanding of how an interview is conducted, what is expected behavior, and how to best present oneself. Museum exhibitions have been studied as places where 'identity work' and 'identity exploration' take

place (Rounds 2006). Similar processes can be observed in interviews.

As identity emerges from "a dialectic between internal identification and external ascription" (Howard 2000:375) it is of crucial importance who the individual is speaking to in a dialogic interview. This became visible in the interviews we conducted: We were three persons conducting the interviews, Hanna (Research Coordinator MiST), Berit Johanne (Museum Consultant) and me (PhD candidate). While I participated in all of the interviews, Hanna and Berit Johanne joined me in two interviews each.

We started conversations with introducing the projects we were working on and the purposes of the interviews, namely to contribute to documentation, exhibition and research. We started with very simple questions about age, country of origin, profession, when informants had moved to Hitra, and slowly moved towards more abstract questions as "Do you remember your first contact with the island? What was it like? What do you remember? What is different today?"

In the course of the conversation, we all altered our speaking positions, not only between asking questions or responding to questions, but moreover, we switched between different roles. Hanna started from the position of a museum employee, but could switch into the role of a trained historian or the position of a somebody who was born and raised on Hitra, but who has moved away, thereby becoming somebody who herself could share memories from what life used to be like on Hitra. Berit Johanne on the other hand spoke as museum employee with knowledge about the island's past and switched occasionally into the speaker position of somebody who has moved to the island in grown up age, connecting with conversation partners through the experience of having to find a way into the local community. I spoke from a researcher's point of view, but then also as a migrant and a foreigner to Hitra and Norway, thereby meeting interlocutors as somebody with whom they could share stereotypes and negative feelings towards Norwegians without offending me.

**Positive outcomes in terms of:**

- a) making local history relevant and historical learning,
- b) identity work, and
- c) allowing for the unforeseen

Several interlocutors expressed that they thought Hitra had no history. They explained that since the island lay isolated and only few people have lived there, not much history could have unfolded here. Besides, there were only few historical buildings to be seen on the island, no castles or monuments. When asked about what they knew about the local history, several replied that fish and fishing have always been important for the island and that Hitra got a tunnel to the main land a couple of years ago. But according to them, there was not much more to it.

A Romanian couple had gained the impression that few changes could have occurred on Hitra during the last decades. As a Historian, Hanna then explained that actually, big changes had occurred during the 1920's, 1930's until the 1950's and today. During the

first half of the 20th century, Hitra had been very poor – and then changing to a personal voice – she continued, that she remembered that people only owned one cow or a pig and that she and her family ate fish five times a week, and that after moving away from the island she could not stand to eat fish for a long time. The husband then asked somehow confused: “It was fifty years ago, you still had pigs around the house?” And his wife asked: “But there were not many pigs?” Hanna then replied: “No, we had two pigs. And then my mother had two hens, so she collected eggs and sold some of the eggs to the neighbors.” The husband thus stated: “That sounds very traditional for Romania.” During this little conversation a connection between Hitra's local history and the history of informants' place of origin is made. The connection is further strengthened when Hanna told about a study trip to Romania and how what she saw there reminded her of her childhood on Hitra. Offering a connection between the past and the present, I asked the couple whether they could imagine Hitra in the past, a place with poor life conditions, when what

they met today was a wealthy community. Hanna thus explained what had happened between 1960 and today, the husband took up the topic and wondered “So, this change was because of oil or also because the fish started to come?” His question showed that he has rudimentary knowledge of Norway's history, but that had not been connected to the place they live, Hitra. Hanna thus came back to the topic, explained Hitra's and Norway's development in relation to each other. The husband took this as a starting point to reflect upon the Norwegian ‘olje-eventyr’ (‘oil fairy-tale’) via the ‘Fund’ and finally made statements concerning the global situation today.

This short excerpt shows that in an interview that orients itself towards the ideals of historical thinking and dialogue, local history can be made relevant to immigrants from abroad and historical learning can be facilitated. By turning away from knowledge of facts and memories of exclusively one informant to instead focus on individual memories and experiences as well as subjective interpretations of both interlocutors, entails a change of role for museum workers.

In addition to asking questions, an interviewer can, when appropriate, incorporate knowledge based on literature studies or academic research into the conversation as well as personal experiences.

Turning from factual knowledge and authorized interpretations allows for openness and ambivalence with respect to current developments in the Hitra area. With regard to migration, there is not yet a single identifiable narrative, and in interviews, interlocutors can feel free to express ambivalences and contradictions in their interpretations and judgements of this historical (and current) development, but such views would be unlikely to emerge in a closed 'official' exhibition curated by the local museum. Still, even if the individual's memories or interpretations of the past might not find a place in the final exhibition, he or she experiences an affirmation of his or her view on the past: You have a place in history and you do belong to this place even if you do not find yourself represented in the museum collection or in an exhibition (yet).

Besides identity work and historical learning, inter-

views can contribute to democratizing the museum. Through conversations with people who traditionally are not at home/represented at the local history museum, the museum widens its public, and opens up space for individuals' to express themselves that elsewhere do not feel uncomfortable. During an interview a Romanian couple was eager to express anger and frustration about the local newspaper's coverage of unemployment numbers among immigrants. But they would not comment in the newspapers' forum or elsewhere. What started as a conversation about Hitra's past and life experiences of immigrants to Hitra developed into an open space where everything could be said. During the interviews, conversation partners allowed for the emergence of topics that neither the museum worker nor the interview partner had previously considered. By allowing unplanned issues to emerge, the interviewers surrender control to informants and empowers them to draw their own interpretations (Cameron 2005:230) However, the museum professional's expertise is needed. Only he or she can help people to connect with history and

heritage. We further observed how discussing unforeseen topics challenged taken-for-grantedness and facilitated mutual understanding.

During an interview situation such as outlined above, the museum representative is in a position to acknowledge the relevance of individual historical consciousness. This acknowledgement occurs immediately, as direct responsiveness is the most important advantage of the interview as a museum method. The advantage of immediate response is relevant, particularly because confrontation with history in a museum can lead to what Susan Crane has described as 'distortion'. According to Crane, distortion occurs "when members of publics find that their memories of the past or their experiences are not being met." She continues by stating that "the 'distortion' related to memory and history in the museum is not so much of facts or interpretations, but rather a distortion from the lack of congruity between personal experience and expectation, on the one hand, and the institutional representation of the past on the other" (Crane 1997:44). Interviews avoid distortion because they

minimize expectations of an institution while simultaneously offering a tool for addressing distortion in a productive manner, that is taking misunderstandings as starting point for exchanges of knowledge, ideas and thoughts concerning the local past and individual's position in this past (and present time).

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Museums are well acquainted with interviews as a working method in documentation; they are also experienced in applying dialogic methods in museum didactics. Taking these approaches into an (exhibition) planning phase of museum work, is risky. Still, it offers the surplus of a deeper, more equal and sustainable relationship with members of minority groups. The use of interviews offers a means of acknowledging the manifold narratives that can be found in a multicultural area such as Hitra. In addition, interviews promote consideration of alternative thinking with respect to both the past and the present. As a museum practice, interviews offer a dynamic strategy

for engaging with a changing community and offer a fresh way to address local history. Even though for a small local history museums it is difficult to live up to

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For a recent collection of international examples and research on representations of migration in museums, see Gouriévidis (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Most prominently the Cité Nationale de l'Historie de l'Immigration (CNHI) in Paris. Other examples are Lower East Side Tenement Museum and Ellis Island Museum in New York, Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, Museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Immigration Museum in Melbourne.

<sup>3</sup> Scandinavian examples are the exhibitions 'Becoming a Copenhagener' at the city Museum Copenhagen ([http://www.copenhagen.dk/en/whats\\_on/upcoming\\_special\\_exhibitions/the\\_population\\_of\\_copenhagen](http://www.copenhagen.dk/en/whats_on/upcoming_special_exhibitions/the_population_of_copenhagen)) or 'A Pakistani Home in Norway 2002' at the Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo (<http://www.norskfolkemuseum.no/Utstilling/OBOS-garden/Et-pakistansk-hjem-i-Norge--2002/>.) both accessed 13.01.2015

the ambition of a dialogue institution, dialogic interviews offer a means to follow up such commitment.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. The Research project "MeLa - European Museums in an Age of Migration" (2011-2015), funded by the European Commission. <http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/> accessed 14.04.2016

<sup>5</sup> This is an experience, the staff of The Regional Archive in Trondheim (Statsarkivet i Trondheim) and Sverresborg Trondelag Folk Museum (MiST) made during their project 'Documenting Immigrant shops in Norway' (see Garberg and Gottschal's article in this volume) Even though informants were individually invited to come to the exhibition opening, none of the informants came.

<sup>6</sup> This process accelerated after the 2004 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) and 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) enlargements of the European Union.

<sup>7</sup> There is a vast literature discussing museums and their roles in negotiations of individual and group-identities. See e.g. Cooke 2008:14: "Today, as in the past, collections are an expression of our identity. As we build collections, they become an extension of ourselves; they reflect what we are interested in, our values and our judgements. Collecting historic objects may appear to be about looking back, but very often it can be a concern about looking forward." Also *ibid*:15: "Museums and heritage can impact on the formation and representation of identity and we can construct and explore our identity through cultural participation."

<sup>8</sup> At the Norwegian Folk Museum in Oslo, in an Oslo apartment building was a Pakistani-migrant apartment from 2002 was furnished and put on permanent display among other Norwegian apartments from different periods of time. (see footnote 3). Also in Oslo, the Intercultural Museum (part of Oslo Museums) "collects, documents and communicates knowledge focusing on immigration history and cultural changes in Norwegian society". (<http://www.oslomuseum.no/19-oslomuseum/om-oslo-museum/126-what-is-oslo-museum>; accessed 06.01.2016). See also Bøe 2008; Møller and Einarsen 2008.

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# DOCUMENTING IMMIGRANT SHOPS IN TRØNDELAG

*Ann Siri Hegseth Garberg, Anne Mette Gottschal*

## ABSTRACT

I 2012 satte Statsarkivet i Trondheim og Sverresborg, en av enhetene i Museene i Sør-Trøndelag, i gang et samtidokumentasjonsprosjekt. En liten del av innvandrernes historie skulle dokumenteres for kommende generasjoner og for forskning. Det ble valgt å dokumentere innvandrerbutikker i Trøndelag, både gjennom intervju, fotografi og innsamling av arkiv. I denne artikkelen presenterer vi en del av funnene i prosjektet, og vi setter dem opp mot en studie av innvandrerbutikker i Oslo.

Begrepet innvandrerbutikker blir på engelsk over-

satt til immigrant shop. I tillegg til å definere hva innvandrerbutikker er, presenterer vi funnene som ble gjort om hvorfor innvandrere starter opp en butikk. Det finnes flere grunner til dette, blant annet en såkalt negativ motivasjon, at de ikke finner seg annet arbeid. Informantene i prosjektet fremhever ofte at det er et eget valg å drive butikk. Flere fremhever tradisjon som årsak, altså at familie har drevet butikk, eller at de selv drev butikk før de kom til Norge.

Butikkene i Trøndelag har ulikt vareutvalg og ulike kundegrupper. Disse funnene presenterer vi også

i artikkelen. Vi ser også at de første butikkene som ble etablert på 1980- og -90-tallet ikke har forsvunnet, men at de har skiftet både eier, navn og lokale flere ganger. Nye butikker har også kommet til, og nye varer er tilgjengelig. Etableringen av butikker henger

sammen med hvilke innvandregrupper som etablerer seg i regionen.

Fokus har vært på at deres historie også skal bli fortalt i arkiv og museum, og at dokumentasjonen danner et grunnlag for videre formidling og forskning.

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## INTRODUCTION

Museums and archives should collect and document the contemporary history of new immigrants in Norway. In the region of Trøndelag, people from many different countries live and work. Some of them have come as refugees and asylum-seekers, some have married ethnic Norwegians; others have come to earn their living as craftsmen or workers in the fish-farming and seafood-industry (Müller 2016). Some have decided to settle with their families. Their descendants should find something about their own life and history in museums and archives and feel these institutions relevant and belonging to them.

In 2012 the Regional Archive in Trondheim (Statsarkivet i Trondheim) and Sverresborg - Mu-

seums of South-Trøndelag, decided to document a tiny part of the new immigrants' history to preserve their stories for future generations and for further research. We wanted to document contemporary history through the history of immigrant shops in the region by interviewing owners, taking pictures of their stores and to collect archives and photographs. The documentation project resulted in a master thesis and a report (Gottschal 2014, Flakne, Garberg, Gottschal, Sivertsen 2015).

## WHY RUNNING A STORE?

When starting the project, we had an idea about documenting a tradition, before it was all gone. We knew that the first Vietnamese shop popped up in

Trondheim in 1984 due to a relatively large number of Vietnamese refugees moving to the region at that time. Other shops have existed for years as well (Stugu 1997: 320). We wanted to document and preserve the histories of these grocery stores.

Assumptions said that these kind of shops would cease to exist in a few years because the next generation does not want to run a shop (Wikipedia). The next generation will assimilate; the children will get higher education and do not want to follow their parents' example. That is what has happened to small grocery stores run by Norwegians as family businesses. The regional newspaper *Adresseavisen* claimed in 1995 that "The corner shops – run by man and wife – have lost in the competition with the large supermarkets....today they have been replaced by our new fellow-countrymen" (Stugu 1997:320). Did our assumption correspond to the results of the documentation project?

In this article, we will also discuss why immigrants have decided to start grocery stores. International research has three different theories: immigrants estab-

lish their own business because of choice, necessity or tradition. These theories are presented in a study, carried out by the social scientist Anne Krogstad in 2006, about culinary entrepreneurship among ethnic minorities in Oslo (Krogstad 2006: 55). How will these theories correspond to our study in the region of Trøndelag?

Finally, we want to look more closely on the assortment and the customers they are approaching. Do they mainly approach "an immigrant market" or ethnic Norwegian customers? Our findings will be compared to the results from the study in Oslo.

#### DEFINITION

We have decided to use the term *immigrant shop*, which is a direct translation of the Norwegian term. When searching for the general English term, the one that is frequently used is ethnic *minority business*.

The definition of an immigrant shop, according to a Norwegian encyclopedia (Store Norske Leksikon), is a small shop, owned and run by a single person or a

family with another cultural background than ethnic Norwegian. The assortment consists of fruit, vegetables, and products better known in the owner's country of origin than in Norway. These shops are part of the global entrepreneurship and transnationalism we find in our society today.

Immigrant shops can be divided into at least four different categories based on the goods they sell and which customers they are approaching, according to Krogstad:

*Category 1:* Norwegian market: Norwegian products/Ethnic Norwegian customers

*Category 2:* Immigrant market: Norwegian products/Ethnic minority customers

*Category 3:* Exotic market: Foreign products/Ethnic Norwegian customers

*Category 4:* Ethnic market: Foreign products/Ethnic minority customers

There is also a fifth category concerning "cross-over", but this category relates to restaurants, not grocery stores.

This model, where Krogstad has been inspired by Ali Najib and Geir H. Moshuus, will not capture all the variations, dynamic processes and market adaptation done by the immigrant entrepreneurs (Krogstad 2006: 99-100).

#### METHODS AND SELECTION OF INFORMANTS

Archive professionals from the Regional Archive started mapping the immigrant shops and made several visits to some of the shops. They tried to explain the project and to make appointments with the owners. This was quite difficult, because the owners were skeptical to archives and indifferent to museums and did not understand what these institutions expected from them. The project team made some information material in different languages – Urdu, Arabic, Vietnamese and Farsi – to explain the roles of museums and archives. The Archive even invited some owners to the Archive, with minor success.

Things started to happen, when students from the university started working in the project, as part of their museum practice. They worked together with museum professionals in the first part of the project, later on they were engaged in the project. Focus changed from collection of archives to interviews and documentation through photographs. The students carried on with the mapping, which resulted in 25 shops in the whole region. Fourteen of them were documented – 56% of the immigrant shops in Trøndelag. Five of the shops are situated in the city center of Trondheim, four in the suburban area and the rest in different parts of the region.

It is well-known from oral history research that the best way of talking to people about their own history is to visit them in their homes without any disturbance (Hodne, Kjeldstadli, Rosander 1981:53). We realized that this advice was not possible to make use of in this project. The purpose was not to interview the shop owners about their whole life. This was not a life cycle interview, but a thematic one, where focus would be on the shop, the work in the shop, why they

run a shop, the goods and the customers.

Informants were told that the interview should be carried out in a quiet and neutral place in the shop or nearby, to avoid taking too much of the shop owners' time and effort. Some of the informants were quite busy and some interviews were cancelled or they turned up late. They had to run their businesses! Sometimes we experienced that they had to keep the shop open and to serve their customers during the interview. That was not a preferable situation. Once an interview had to be carried out in a café, with lots of music.

There were also interviews in calm places without disturbances – in the informant's office, in the storage or outside. These informants were much more focused and the result was much better, because there were more reflections and dialogue.

A part of the preparation process before the interviews was to write a guide with questions and topics. We used a set form with topics and made questions around these topics. The guide was based on chronological events in the shop owner's life, with two main

topics; their personal history and the running of the shop. The first questions dealt with the personal story of the shop owner, with questions about their education, the immigration to Norway, their work background and their motivation to start a business. The second main topic was about the daily life in a shop. How is an ordinary day? What about opening hours, customers and stories about challenges or positive experiences in running a shop. What kind of goods do they sell, food and non-food? Importers?

During the first interviews, we stuck to the question list, but later on, the dialogue became more free and relaxed. Then we had learnt a lot and we started to ask more questions and new questions (Müller 2016).

We also took photographs of the shop interiors and portraits of the owners. With these two methods, we have managed to capture and safeguard both the tangible and the intangible heritage around these shops. Some of these photographs are shown at the end of the volume.

## WHY DO ETHNIC MINORITIES START GROCERY STORES?

There exist different theories. One question in international literature in the field is "Are they pushed or do they jump?" Do they establish their own business because of necessity or own choice? Other researchers are talking about maintenance of a way of life (Krogstad 2006: 55).

Some researchers claim that immigrants wish to be independent, to own something and to be employers, especially people from India and Pakistan according to Kristin Kolbeinstveit Wist (referred to in Krogstad 2006:58). It happens due to a positive motivation – it is their own choice. According to other researchers, there may be a negative motivation: it is difficult to find a job, so running a shop is the only choice. Roger Waldinger, Howard Aldrich and Robin Ward claim the immigrants are forced into entrepreneurship (referred to in Krogstad 2006:57). The third theory, by Thomas Høyrupe, focuses on the immigrants' way of life and claims that immigrants choose a job where

they may maintain their former way of life and their families' traditions (referred to in Krogstad 2006:60).

How do these theories correspond to our material? Do our informants run a shop due to choice, necessity or tradition? All the informants in our research engage family members or relatives in their business – some more, some less. About a half of them seems to have chosen to run a shop. Some of them have chosen this because their mother or father has run a similar business:

*“Since I was a kid I always helped my mother to run, just a small place. So I almost know everything, how to do...”* (21.05.2014)<sup>1</sup>

One of the Turkish men says he runs a shop because he likes it and because his father had a shop in Turkey (25.11.2013). One of the Asian women has chosen a job where she may maintain her former way of life too. She knows how to run a shop, because her mother also did this in Vietnam, and she likes it because she is independent (30.10.2013). She tells that her husband did not like it, he denied her, but now he

helps her in the shop. Krogstad has also seen from her survey, that a woman's business may be perceived as a threat to her family – especially her husband (Krogstad 2006:59).

An own 'choice', seems to be combined quite often with tradition and maintenance of a way of life from their countries of origin. However, the motivation to start their own business may be provoked by problems in the Norwegian labour market (Kjelstadli (red) 2003: 216). Due to language problems or because their diplomas do not fit into the Norwegian system, they cannot get a job. They are forced or pushed into starting their own business, due to negative motivation. One of the female shop owners says:

*“When we came here, I was quite old and did not speak Norwegian very well and it was hard to find a job. I need to have a job to support myself”* (01.11.2013).

Three of the male shop owners in our research, have a formal education at a university level from their countries of origin as an architect, biologist and

pharmacist (Flakne, Garberg, Gottschal, Sivertsen 2015:15). They say they cannot get jobs according to their education. Running a shop may be a strategy of survival, more than a real choice. However, just one of them expresses this quite clearly. He says that he is not very fond of his job and running a shop was not his intention (11.11.2013).

There is a mixture of reasons why immigrants start grocery stores. It is hard to draw a firm conclusion. While the negative motivation seems to be the most likely reason among the ethnic minorities in food-related business in Oslo (Krogstad 2006: 132), our informants tend to emphasize 'choice', but very often as part of a tradition, as the main reason.

#### ASSORTMENT AND CUSTOMERS

We have not tried to get any exact figures to tell who the customers are, just asked the owners. 'Our' immigrant shops belong mainly to category 2 and 4, and to a certain extent to category 3. Most of the shops are combinations of these. There are also other combi-

nations to be seen. Two of the informants run a hair salon close to the shop or within the shop, one runs a restaurant and one has a sewing room where she works as a dressmaker as well.

The shops categorized to the ethnic market (Category 4), sell foreign products to immigrants. There will not be enough customers to run a grocery store if the owners should focus just on one ethnic group. Even in Oslo, the customer base is not big enough to do that, so a larger and general 'ethnic market' is necessary (Krogstad 2006: 134 -135). This seems relevant in Trøndelag as well. As already mentioned, the owners try as best they can, to cover their customers' demand. Though some shop owners just sell goods they know from their own food culture, especially we see this in the shops run by women from Asia. They have very specific goods for the culinary traditions in different parts of Asia (30.10.2013).

Most shops have a mixture of goods for different immigrant groups and the shop owners are flexible and make changes in their assortment due to demand. The shops in the region are based even more

on demand than the shops in the city center. One of the owners in the region tells us about different food traditions from Turkey, Sri-Lanka, India, Thailand, Philippines and Africa. The customers come to her shop and write down what they want, and she will order it for them (25.03.2014). One of the shop owners told that when groups of migrant workers from the Baltic countries and Poland moved into the district, he changed some of the selection in his shop to meet new demands. He does not even understand what he is actually selling (11.11.2013).

In the shops in and around the city of Trondheim, fresh goods will arrive almost daily. This means that they can offer a wide assortment of vegetables and fruit every day, unlike the shops outside town, which get fresh fruit and vegetables once a week. These shops need to have a wider assortment of other types of goods: non-food goods as make-up, hair products, carpets, pillows and kitchen equipment. The owners tell that they import these products themselves from London and Dubai, and these products may be stored for a longer period (11.11.2013, 25.03.2014). They are

not as sensitive as fresh fruit and vegetables, of course. Telephone cards seems to be quite a business as well, but some say there is a competition from Skype, so the market is falling. Money Transfer is another branch to rely on and quite many of the shops are engaged in this. The shop owners explain that they want to help their customers, but we suppose there is good money is this business as well. One owner tells that money transfer is important to get new customers:

*“Now there are customers from other places coming here to send money – and buy”* (17.03.2014)

We discovered that some of the shops also deliver goods to restaurants run by different ethnic minorities, because they have a good deal with the importers in Oslo (03.12.2013, 22.11.2013, 25.11.2013).

In some shops more than a half of the customers are ethnic Norwegians according to the owners (22.11.2013) and this corresponds to the survey in Oslo (Krogstad 2006: 98). While ethnic minority customers buy all they need in the shops or ask for cheap goods, Norwegians buy just some products, especially

fruit and vegetables, as the Oslo survey also shows (Krogstad 2006: 117). Norwegians also buy sauces, juices and spices according to our informants. Many shops have goods especially for the Norwegian market, which this statement illustrates:

*“I always ask if they have tried the food before and where? If they just have eaten such food here in Norway, I know they do not like it so strong. If they have tasted this food in Thailand or Vietnam, I know they will like it. You have to teach them to be careful, to test it first”* (30.10.2013).

She tells that she gets food and spices from an importer in Oslo, who has specialized on Asian food for Norwegians, which is not as strong as Asians are used to: “They (Norwegian customers) can’t stand it, they almost burn” (30.10.2013).

It may take a while before a shop is established and customers come back frequently. The immigrant shops often help and have contact with the customers on a personal level. Customers get service and help with recipes. The result of this is that they come back.

*“Norwegians try many different types of food, not just the same. First, I ask what kind of meat they like, because each type of meat has its own spice. Taste is so different!”* (30.10.2013).

Ethnic Norwegians ask for advice, because they have tasted foreign food while travelling abroad or in a restaurant. This is exactly the same answers as the shop owners in Oslo give (Krogstad 2006: 117).

Some shop owners advise their customers to search for recipes on the internet as well (19.06.2013). Ethnic Norwegian customers are not familiar with most products in the immigrant shops (25.11.2013). This can be seen as part of an exotic market, where ethnic Norwegian customers buy foreign products (Category 3). To succeed in this market, it is important to know how much spices Norwegians can tolerate and to know how to respond to Norwegian customers’ expectations according to service and hygiene, Krogstad claims. (Krogstad 2006: 101).

As the pictures in the documentation and this article show, the shops are quite different. Some are,

what we can describe as traditional immigrant shops, but we have observed that new shops are much more streamlined, presenting goods in the same way as chain stores, run by ethnic Norwegians. Is this a way of responding to expectations from Norwegian customers? One of the owners explains why:

*“Everybody likes a tidy shop. It is easier for the customer to find what they are searching”*  
(22.11.2013).

There is also an immigrant market (category 2), where the shops sell Norwegian products to ethnic minority customers. These are fresh products, like eggs, milk and halal meat – chicken and beef. It is not easy to get halal meat in Trøndelag now. There was a local slaughterhouse, which delivered halal meat near Trondheim, but now one of the informants has to get this kind of meat from the southern part of Norway (11.11.2013). One also tells that some immigrants do not always trust halal meat produced in Norway (21.05.2014). Just one of our informants sells fresh halal meat, while some of the others sell frozen chicken and beef.

## FIRST GENERATION IMMIGRANTS

As expected, the shops were not run by second-generation immigrants, except for one. The first owners or their family members ran none of the shops established in the 1980’s in Trondheim. Most shops are still there, but with a new owner – a first generation immigrant. Therefore, it was impossible to find any archives from the eldest shops. When the shop gets a new owner, everything seems to be thrown away. We could hardly find any traces from the early businesses, but immigrant shops are mentioned in publications about the history of Trondheim and Trøndelag (Stugu 1997:320 og Stugu 2005:456).

There is just one second-generation owner, who has taken over his father’s business. His father is still working in the shop, helping his son. Other family members are working in the shop now and then. This shop owner (let us call him “Ali”) says it is much work and he is not always satisfied with this kind of life. We met ‘Ali’ several times, and one day he was happy and

satisfied, the next he was in doubt if he wanted to go on running his own business. ‘Ali’ has worked in another company earlier, driving machines, and he says that kind of work gave him more income and more spare time (19.06.2013). He is married now and he likes to have a holiday. Running a shop is hard work. On the other side, he feels an obligation against his family to run the business, which his father established in 2005. His father expects him to do this, because running a shop makes you independent (Adresseavisen, 18.juni 2013).

In all the other shops investigated, there are first generation immigrants running the shops. Some of them have established a new facility, but most of them have hired or bought a shop, which was already established. During the project period, we observed that new shops were popping up and some shops closed down. There seems to be a constant change of owners. Ten of the fourteen informants have run their stores for less than five years. The selection of shops seems to reflect the composition of the migrant population and they are quite market oriented.

Why do not the shop owners hand their business over to the next generation? The answers seem quite clear and correspond to the findings in Oslo (Krogstad 2006: 63). The immigrants have ambitions for their children’s future careers. They want them to get higher education, to study at the university, in order to get well-paid jobs in Norway. Their children help them in the shop after school, but the children have to do their homework – this is important (30.10.2013). Some say that they will be very glad if their children get an education (25.03.2014) and they are quite clear in expressing that they do not want their children to take over their business: “Much work – control, work and competition.” (11.11.2013).

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

When starting the project, we had an idea about documenting a tradition, before it was all gone. We also assumed that there will be no second-generation immigrants running a shop, because they will be assimilated and get other jobs. As expected, the answers

correlate to our hypothesis concerning second-generation immigrants, but the shops do not cease to exist. There is a huge turnover among owners, and new first generation immigrants have taken over the shops. There are few, if any, traces from the first immigrant shops to find. Therefore, there were no archives to collect. Nobody had pictures from their shops and were glad to get the pictures we took during the project.

A part of the documentation was to collect the existing shops' archives, but this was harder than expected. There are no laws imposing private businesses to take care of archives in Norway, either analog or digital archives. They just have to save accounting information for a certain number of years. Today, communication goes between the shops and the importers by telephone and e-mail and therefore one of the shop owners says:

“What do you want? My old computer?”  
(22.11.2013)

Another reason for problems with collecting archives among the ethnic minority shop owners was

a fear we noticed, talking about Archives, especially archives connected with the state. They could not understand why the Archive was interested in them. Therefore, a part of the project turned out to be an important reminder for the museum and the archive. We had to convince the shop owners that we were actually interested to document their stories for future generations.

#### Informants quoted in the article

Except 21.05.2014, all of the quotes are translated from Norwegian to English by the authors.

| Date       | Gender | Country of origin | Year of birth |
|------------|--------|-------------------|---------------|
| 19.06.2013 | man    | Iraq              | 1985          |
| 30.10.2013 | woman  | Vietnam           | 1970          |
| 01.11.2013 | woman  | Vietnam           | 1956          |
| 11.11.2013 | man    | Tunisia           | 1961          |
| 22.11.2013 | man    | Vietnam           | 1979          |
| 25.11.2013 | man    | Turkey            | 1972          |
| 03.12.2013 | man    | Iraq              | 1971          |
| 17.03.2014 | woman  | Afghanistan       | 1973          |

|            |       |             |      |
|------------|-------|-------------|------|
| 25.03.2014 | woman | Sri Lanka   | 1958 |
| 21.05.2014 | woman | Philippines | 1979 |

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The interviews are referred to with the date of the interview and are listed in the end of this article with gender, country of origin and year of birth

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# REASONS TO ENGAGE – MUSEUMS' POWER AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Torstein Bach*

## ABSTRACT

Hvilken makt har museene, og hvilket ansvar følger med denne makten? Bør museene bruke sin makt til å påvirke samfunnsutviklingen, og hva kan eventuelt bli konsekvensene hvis de ikke gjør det? Artikkelen tar for seg disse spørsmålene og belyser dem gjennom eksempler fra norsk museumspraksis. Det argumenteres for at museene, gjennom måten de tar i bruk sine samlinger og kunnskap, har makt til å påvirke viktige diskurser i samfunnet. Dette er med på å forme vår forståelse av virkeligheten, noe som blir avgjørende for de valgene vi tar. Troverdighet er viktig for å kunne inneha denne type diskursiv makt, og museer har en unik mulighet til å oppnå troverdighet ved å knyt-

te kunnskapen som formidles til de primære kildene som er grunnlaget for kunnskapen.

I et eksempel drøftes Romanienes historie og situasjon i Norge, og hvordan manglende oppmerksomhet omkring denne gruppen gjorde at det tok svært lang tid før overgrepene mot dem tok slutt. En museumsutstilling om Romaniene på slutten av 1980-tallet var en av flere faktorer som ga dem større oppmerksomhet, og gjorde at de tilslutt ble anerkjent som minoritet og mottok en offentlig unnskyldning fra myndighetene. Et annet eksempel viser hvordan samarbeidsprosjekter mellom museer og eksterne grupper basert på likeverdig status og personlig kontakt

kan være en god metode for skape sosial inkludering, minske fordommer og forebygge konflikter mellom ulike grupper, noe som også finner støtte i samfunnsvitenskapelig forskning.

Makten museene har i kraft av sine samlinger, kunnskaper og sosiale aktiviteter innebærer et sosialt

ansvar, og det argumenteres for at det er i museenes interesse å bruke denne makten til å jobbe for et samfunn preget av bærekraft og fredelig sameksistens, ettersom dette er det som best kan sikre både samfunnets og museenes videre eksistens.

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## INTRODUCTION

As social institutions, museums have always in some way been involved in social development, though they might not been conscious about it all the time. Through their assignment of selecting objects and histories that should be taken care of, be valuated, and represent society at different periods of time, museums have an ability to influence on social developments. During the collecting process, what is selected, and what is left out, becomes of equal importance. A quote from Michel Foucault aptly sums up the kind of discursive power museums involve in:

*“Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart.*

*In like manner, silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions; but they also loosen its holds and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance.” (Foucault 1978, 101)*

The museum-collections, and the exhibitions and activities based upon them, enter the discourse about our history and contributes in shaping our understanding of the past, which form a basis for present decision-making. When museums are involved in this discursive power, a relevant question is what responsibilities comes with it? What power do museums have in influencing social developments, and is social developments something museums should take an active part in? What could be the consequences of not involving in social developments, and in what

ways can museums engage if they decide to do so? Though by no means new, I think these issues are important to deal with regularly in our museum-practice, in order to reflect upon what we are doing, and the choices we make.

In the following I will discuss these questions, by using examples from museum practice in Trøndelag and Norway in general. I will also discuss different ways museums can engage in social developments, divided into two main categories, the traditional museum-exhibition, and participatory projects that involves close cooperation with external groups.

## MUSEUMS, POWER AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Richard Sandell is one of those who have highlighted museum's social responsibility, as well as the challenges by getting museums to be active in taking this responsibility. According to him the concept of social responsibility is not new to the museum, and can be traced back to the early 1980s (Sandell 2003, 20). San-

dell claims "Museums and galleries of all kinds have both the potential to contribute towards the combating of social inequality and a responsibility to do so." (Sandell 2002, 3).

However not new, the concept of social responsibility seem to have arrived quite late in discussions related to museums. In business a similar notion – corporate social responsibility - became popular in the 1960s (Wikipedia contributors 2016a). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) relates to the initiatives of a corporation to assess and take responsibility for its effects on environmental and social wellbeing (Investopedia, LLC 2016). One reason why the concept emerged and became important was the realization that large companies are very powerful and often have substantial effects on the society in which they operate. Social responsibility is in this way closely connected to power, and the way large companies pursue their power is by using their financial abilities. Museums have their code of ethics provided by ICOM (2013) that cover most of the responsibilities included in CSR, but with regard to power, at least financial

power, they cannot compare to large companies.

Instead, museums most prominent source of power is cultural; it is based on their collections and the knowledge gathered around them. Museums' social power expresses itself through the way they make use of their collection and knowledge in society, and the way they use it is through exhibitions, lectures, publications and other outreach activities. These outreach activities implies that the power of museums is discursive, that it has the ability to influence discourses. Foucault (Rabinow 1991, 74) describes discursive power as a kind of 'truth-regime' that pervades society, and which is in constant flux and negotiation. Typical kinds of "regime of truth" may be a society's dominant interpretation of the past or dominant opinions about how the world works. These are kinds of "truth" that museums have the possibility to influence and shape.

Consequently, a museums cultural and social power rests on its credibility, the supposition that the knowledge presented have been thoroughly treated and is based on primary sources. In museum exhi-

bitions, knowledge and sources are often displayed together, and the great advantage of museums, as well as other archival institutions, is that they have direct access to the primary sources that serves as evidence of the 'truth' presented. In this way museums have a notable power, and as power and responsibility goes hand in hand, this also entail a great responsibility. Dominant opinions about the past and how the world works, may have substantial influence on decisions made in society, both individually and collectively. How museums collect, take care of and expose their collections have in this way a power to influence social developments, as new generations will use the primary sources in museums and archival institutions to create their own worldview and interpretations of the past.

## CREDIBILITY AND POWER

Sandell (2002, 3) has pointed out, that there are many within the museum and cultural sector who are uncomfortable with taking an overtly social role and

being engaged in societal development. A reason for this may be that museums have been perceived as neutral ground, a place not for political opinions, but for unbiased presentations of knowledge or the 'truth'. A recent episode from the museum reality in Norway may exemplify this. In 2014, the director at Trondheim Kunstmuseum Pontus Kyander wrote an introduction to the spring program where he takes a powerful statement against "the global resurgence of nationalism", and in which he names the Norwegian Progress Party (in Norwegian: *Fremskrittspartiet*) as an example of a dangerous nationalist-party that "belittle concepts like human sense of community, human rights and equality" (Kyander 2014). The Progress Party was a part of the government in Norway at the time, and the text made a big fuss, primarily because the Norwegian minister of culture made a phone call to the board leader of the museum to ask him about the text. The board leader in turn called the head of The Museums in South-Trøndelag (where Trondheim Kunstmuseum is a part), who responded by criticizing Kyander, and assuring that the text

did not represent the opinions of The Museums of South-Trøndelag (Smedsrud 2014; Vollan and Brekke 2014).

A remarkable thing about this story is why a text included in the spring program with a quite narrow audience, could cause such great attention. Kyanders text in itself is hardly exceptional. It has a clear link to the exhibitions of the forthcoming artists that spring, as well as the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Norwegian constitution. In addition, it reflects a strong personal commitment against the darker aspects of nationalism, namely intolerance and the tendency to value your own nationality over others, something that historically has proved to cause exclusion and hostility to immigrants and ethnic minorities. That he mentions the Progress Party in such a context is not very surprising, as it is long known as the most immigration-skeptical party represented at the parliament, and similar connections have been done frequently in public debates.

So, why did the text create this big attention? How seriously a message is understood, often depends on

the sender, and most likely it has something to do with Kyanders status as a museum director. As mentioned, museums are commonly associated with unbiased presentations of the 'truth', and not the 'truth', as presented by a particular stance. It is a place where people expect that knowledge is presented in a balanced and impartial way. Therefore, what may be exceptional in relation to Kyanders text is not that someone makes this kind of statement, but that a museum director do it in the context of a museum. The museum context suggests that Kyanders statement is the 'truth'; that the Progress Party really is a nationalistic party with all its negative associations. This is possibly what provoked the government where the Progress Party was a part.

For museums in Norway, this incident can be understood in both negative and positive ways. On the negative side, the intervention by the minister may suggest that museums in Norway are not completely free from political influence, and expected to be supportive and not to criticize leading political parties. On the other side, the story shows that museums have

a kind of authority, or power to make assertions about the 'truth', that is strong enough to provoke reactions when statements not accepted by everyone are presented. This must be seen as a positive outcome for the museum-institution, as it indicates that it has a strong credibility and is taken seriously whenever a statement is put forward. This credibility must be very valuable for museums as it indicates that they are important and influential institutions in society.

#### SHOULD MUSEUMS ENGAGE IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS?

Is it then possible to engage in social developments and at the same time take care of the credibility by being balanced and thorough in the presentation of knowledge? Probably it is.

If a concluding statement, even if it is provoking for someone, is based on scientific research or in-depth discussions along with empirical data, this should be sufficient to take care of the credibility. However, as the receivers of the statement do not intuitively un-

derstand the background for it, it may be necessary to inform about the pro-con arguments and empirical data that leads to the conclusion in order to show that the statement is balanced and credible. This could be challenging in for example an exhibition, with rather short texts containing less discussions and empirical data. Nevertheless, if the exhibition is based on scientific research, this would also mean that the data and discussions are available, and can be presented to those who ask for it.

The question remains: Should museums engage in social developments? As mentioned before, museums, as social institutions, always are involved in social developments in some way. Therefore, the question should rather be how museums should engage in social developments? As a start, we can propose a very general argument in relation to this. Society can develop in a number of ways; it may evolve into conflict and non-sustainability, or into peaceful co-existence and sustainability, as well as every state in between. As museums are involved in social developments, it would hardly be controversial for them to

work for peaceful coexistence and sustainable development. After all, these are standpoints shared by the great majority of people. In the end, it is also in the museum's own interest to work for such a development, as museums are very vulnerable when it comes to conflicts, war and environmental disasters. Recent conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, for not to mention the Second World War, proves that no catastrophes are more disastrous for museums than wars and conflicts. Nowadays global warming also poses serious threats to museums, and loss of habitats and extinction of species directly destroys the basis for natural history museums. From this perspective, museums have every reason to engage in social development. The opposite, not to use its power to make a difference, is scarcely a better option, as it only – by its silence - serves to support the status quo, or the 'regimes of truth' that are prevailing.

## CONSEQUENCES OF ABSENT DISCOURSE: THE CASE OF THE ROMANI PEOPLE IN NORWAY

The fate of the Romani<sup>1</sup> people in Norway after the Second World War may serve as an example of what the consequences may be if nobody breaks the silence and starts to engage in the injustice done to a group of people. To better understand the historical context in which this injustice took place, it is necessary to take a closer look at the history of the Romanies.

The Romani people in Norway includes groups with different language and culture who have arrived at different times (Minken 2015). Despite of this they share a common historical origin and heritage. The first ones arrived in the 16th century and are by that regarded as the oldest immigrant-group in Norway. Just like elsewhere in Europe the Romani people in Norway have a long history of repression and persecution. In the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century they were expelled from Denmark and Sweden. Later, death penalty were introduced for leaders of Romani-groups

while other members of the group where expelled. In 1643 it became statutory to hold annual inquisitions against vagrants and beggars, and these evolved into so-called *fantejakter* where Romanies, among others, were hunted by the locals. Those who were caught could be expelled, detained, or simply shot (Wikipedia contributors 2012). These hunts took place regularly for more than a century, and lasted long after the provision officially ceased. The last recorded *fantejakt* occurred in Flå in South-Trøndelag in 1907 (Schlüter 1993, 76-77).

In 1754 it became legal with permission from the *Amtmann*<sup>3</sup> to travel around in the Amtmann's region to practice some of the typical professions Romanies performed (Minken 2015). This helped in some degree to legalize the Romani's itinerant life. In the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, new groups of Romanies came to Norway (Nisja-Wilhelmsen 2012). Though they shared the same origin, these Romanies did no longer have the same language and culture as those who came earlier. The reason for this new influx of Romanies was that they had been held as slaves in

Wallachia and Moldavia, and when slavery became prohibited in 1856 (Wikipedia contributors 2016c) the Romanies started to emigrate (Nisja-Wilhelmsen 2012). From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the politics in Norway shifted to assimilation and attempts towards settling the Romanies (Minken 2015). Missions stood in the forefront of this work, and a consequence was that Romani children were taken from their families and placed in orphanages and foster.

After 1934 many Romani women became victims to a new law on sterilization, which opened up to forced or voluntary sterilization among socially disadvantaged women. The sterilization-practice was a part of a larger trend of so-called 'racial hygiene'. In Germany the Nazi-regime decided that the Jews and the Romanies were the two ethnic groups that should be eradicated (Nisja-Wilhelmsen 2012). During World War II it is estimated that about 6 million Jews and between 220 000 and 1,5 mill. Romanies were killed (Wikipedia contributors 2016c) After the war Germany payed compensation to the Jews, but not to the Romanies, as it was claimed the Romanies were

not persecuted because of their ethnicity, but because of their "criminal and anti-social history" (Nisja-Wilhelmsen 2012). However, in 1982, West Germany finally admitted genocide on the Romani people.

In the occupied Norway during the war, the Nazi-regime expanded the permission to conduct sterilization without consent (Minken 2015). Key people in the Nasjonal Samling<sup>4</sup> planned to eradicate the Romanies in Norway in 1943, but the war ended before they managed to put the plans into effect (Wikipedia contributors 2016d). After the war the assimilation-politics continued. A new law in 1951 prohibited itinerants to have horses, something that stricken the Romanies. The sterilization-practice continued (Seip and Haave 2005), and so did the work by missions, which continued to take Romani children from their families and place them into institutions (Wikipedia contributors 2016d). The general attitudes towards the Romanies did not start to change until the 1970-thies when a public debate about the cruelties committed against the Romanies emerged (Minken 2015). Still, it took a long time before Norwegian au-

thorities officially apologized for the way they had treated the Romanies, something that did not happen until in 1998.

#### A COLLECTIVE OBLIVION OF THE FATE OF THE ROMANIES

It is difficult to understand how the treatment of the Romanies could continue in more or less the same way after the war as it did before the war. While Jews received some kind of redress and were paid compensation, the Romanies had to wait for more than half a century until they received an apology from Norwegian authorities. It seems clear that after the war, Holocaust became primarily associated with the genocide on the Jews, and the fact that it also included the Romanies, as well as many other groups, did not in the same way become a part of the collective historical memory. The genocide on the Romanies was for a long time somehow forgotten and literally absent from public discourse in Norway. It was not taught in schools and not mentioned in history books, and

consequently it was not something people in general knew anything about.

Another consequence of the war was The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations General Assembly adopted it on 10 December 1948 with support from Norway (United Nations 1948). The Declaration was, among other things, supposed to protect minorities against discrimination. In spite of this it had no effect on how the Romanies were treated by Norwegian authorities.

How this oblivion of the fate of the Romanies could take place is lacking good answers. What we may claim is that it probably led to a lot of human suffering in the years after the war that could have been avoided if Romanies' situation during the war had been part of a public discourse and the collective memory. If someone had taken the initiative to put this on the agenda, the Romanies might not had to wait more than 50 years for an apology from Norwegian authorities. This initiative could have been taken by organizations or institutions, people within the Humanities or others. It is feasible to imagine that

museums could have taken the lead in this by documenting their life and history, and create awareness of their situation in exhibitions and discussions. However, the Romanies were not on the museums agenda at that time, and they stayed off their agenda for more than 40 years after the war ended.

Perhaps the first museum-exhibition about the Romanies in Norway, *De reisende – en glemt minoritet* (*Travelers – a forgotten minority*), opened at Levanger Museum in 1990. It was a travelling exhibition, and it came to Trøndelag Folkemuseum in the following year (Garberg 2009:145). The exhibition was based on the work by Ragnhild Schlüter who conducted a research on the Romanies from 1986-90 (Schlüter 1993:9-10)<sup>5</sup>. In 1997 Glomdalsmuseet started to work systematically with the Romanies' culture and history, and in 2000 the museum officially became a center for documentation and presentation of the culture and history of the Romanies (St.meld. nr 15, 2000-2001, 55). Glomdalsmuseet opened the exhibition *Latjo Drom*, concerning Romanies' culture and history, in 2006 (Glomdalsmuseet 2011)

Surely, museums were slow to engage in this case. In general, the impression is that museums in many cases tend to lie in the aftermath of social developments. Instead of influencing social change, it is rather that museums are influenced by social changes that take place. Hopefully this is about to change, but at present it seems like most museums still have a way to go.

#### INFLUENCING “TRUTH REGIMES” THROUGH EXHIBITION AND RESEARCH

Exhibitions like *Travelers – a forgotten minority* and *Latjo Drom* are examples of a common way for museums to attract visitors and impart knowledge. Such exhibitions usually consist of a mixture of texts, pictures, physical objects and various audio-visual devices. Most often, the making of an exhibition requires research, interviews, collecting of artefacts and different kinds of documentation. *Travelers – a forgotten minority* is a good example of this. The ex-

hibition was based on research and interviews, and consisted of photos, artefacts and music that were collected during the project. In addition, it included a slide show and a teaching program for primary school. This shows that the exhibition was part of a larger project that had as its main intention to actively convey knowledge about, and change people's attitudes to, the Romanies. In retrospect, we can see that it may have had an influence. In the decade after the project, the Romanies eventually got redress through a public apology, and a center for documentation and presentation of their culture and history was established. It is likely that the project was one of several factors that contributed to this development. The results that was finally obtained indicate that a museum-exhibition, based on documentation and research and supplied with a teaching program, can be an important method to exercise discursive power and influence on social change.

This history suggests that Schlüter's project contributed to a public recognition of the Romanies by the turn of the millennium, but did the project also

affect people's attitude towards the Romanies in general? This is a much more difficult question to answer. What has happened since indicate that any changes in attitudes have not been transferred to new groups of Romanies that have arrived at a later time. Since 2007, when Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU, there have been a new influx of Romanies who make a living through begging, collecting bottles and other kinds of street work (Djuve et al. 2015, 7). These have not been well received in Norway, ether by the local populations or by the authorities (Djuve et al. 2015, 97-108). A significant proportion of these Romanies have experienced harassment and violence from ordinary Norwegians, and they report to have been driven from their haunts and had assets like mobiles and money confiscated illegally by the police. This has similarities to how other groups of Romanies have been treated in the past.

## THE CONTACT HYPOTHESIS

A museum-exhibition may not have the power to change people's attitudes in a fundamental way, even though it can be an important voice in significant discourses and influence on 'truth-regimes'. Are there other ways museums can engage in social developments which may be more effective in changing people's attitudes?

In the 1950's, the psychologist Gordon W. Allport (1954) carried out a famous study on intergroup contact that resulted in what now is known as 'the contact hypothesis'. Allport's hypothesis was that under appropriate conditions, interpersonal contact could reduce prejudice and lead to better interactions between majority and minority group members. The hypothesis has since then received broad research support. A review from 203 studies in 25 countries found that 94% of the studies supported the contact hypothesis (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Nevertheless, the outcome of intergroup contact is very much dependent on the kind of contact made. To improve

intergroup relationships the hypothesis requires that contact should take place in situations of interpersonal contact, equal status, and in cooperative interdependence in the pursuit of common goals (Forbes 2004, 74; McCauley et al. 2004, 322). Allport (1954, 281) added that.

*“The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups.”*

A typical exhibition-project, like *Travelers – a forgotten minority*, will meet several of these requirements, but fail to meet some of them. The project created contact on a personal level, but this was limited to those who worked with the project and the Romanies that got involved with it. It may also be that both the Romanies and the project group regarded the project and the exhibition as a common goal. However, we cannot assert that it had a contact situation of equal

status. It was the Romanies who were interviewed by the researcher, and not vice versa. And it was probably not a project where the power was equally divided between the project group and the Romanies involved. Considering this, are there other approaches museums can apply, that better meet these requirements?

## PARTICIPATORY PROJECTS

The last decade or so there has been increased focus on participation and social inclusion in museum activities in Norway. Though the initiative seem to appear from the authorities, it may look like museums more or less unconsciously have been working within such a methodological framework for some time already. The subject is presented in the book “Jo fleire kokkar, jo betre søl”<sup>6</sup> published by ABM-Utvikling in 2010 (Brekke 2010). Brekke draws on examples from home and abroad on how museums have worked with inclusion and participation in different projects, and describes how management of cultural heritage may also be a social project. A methodical approach that

is given space is Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), which is a kind of process tool that facilitates participation. PLA emphasizes several of the elements required in the contact hypothesis mentioned above, namely an equal dialogue, work towards common goals, and that all participants should be appreciated, listened to, and seen as who they are (Brekke 2010, 32-33).

Another approach to participation and social inclusion is the *cultural animation* concept. It is currently in use at Astra Museum in Romania where representatives of different ethnic groups are engaged in practicing and presenting their cultural identity at the museum through workshops and various activities. *Cultural animation* as a method focuses on active participation, interpersonal communication, and encourage participants to be in control of the processes and actions they engage in (Comunicologos 2016). In these respects it resembles PLA and similar methods for participation and social inclusion in museums.

## THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROJECT

Sometimes projects that seem to fit in a participatory framework may emerge by themselves, without any plan on PLA or that the project should be socially inclusive in an egalitarian way. An example of this is a project at Orkla Industrial Museum which I became involved in. It all started when a historical society, Meldal Historielag, contacted the museum and wanted to work with the museum's photo collection. The society members, mostly consisting of pensioners, had a strong interest in old photos, especially photos from their own area, where they could identify relatives, acquaintances, buildings, and changes that had occurred in the landscapes through time. The museum, which have a huge collection of photos in need of being preserved, digitalized, and published on the internet, wanted to take advantage of the potential workload the society represented, and decided to make a project out of it, where the volunteers would get the education and technical facilitations needed

to gather information, register and publish photos. In the process from preservation to publication, registration was the task that represented the tightest bottleneck. Great effort was expended to facilitate so that they could start registering, as they had to get access to software and databases, and security measurements had to be put in place so the museum would not risk any loss of data or sensitive information. When these measurements were ready, we started to educate the volunteers who wanted to begin with these tasks.

However, after a while it became clear that the project did not result in the great amount of new registrations and publications we had hoped for. Instead, the registration-work stood close to still, while the society had embarked on another task they had found more interesting and rewarding. This was the information-gathering task. Photos of weddings, confirmations and other parties were especially popular, as they had many people they could try to identify. In this task they showed an impressive commitment, while photos in other categories that the museum wanted to register and publish were left untouched. Soon they

came and asked for more photos of wedding-parties and events with many people pictured, while the bottleneck – registration of photos – remained as tight as ever. Because the museum was not able to deliver enough of the kind of photos they wanted, they have now – in cooperation with the museum – started to collect photos on their own and gather information to these.

The way this project developed led the museum to reconsider the project and set up other goals and meanings to it. Though we are still working with it, we had to admit that registering photos in a database might not be a task that is able to create the great engagement among the volunteers we had hoped for. This kind of work may be too monotonous and exhausting, as it can be quite complicated and requires a high degree of accuracy. On the other hand, to gather information to photos, and collect old photos not represented in the museum yet, is probably the most precarious task the historical society can undertake, simply because people get older and dies, and historical information get lost with them. In this way the

society has helped in navigating the project on a more rewarding path, were the volunteers do what they do best and enjoy most, while the museum is reaping the fruits of their work. In the process, the museum has had to lose control of the project and hand more control to the society, but what have been regained must be considered more valuable. The project is now more characterized by cooperation between equal partners, and the fact that the society now is in greater control of the project have been a booster for the engagement and probably increased the viability of the project.

The lesson learned for the museum is that the control of a project and the engagement attached to it is closely connected, and that loss of some control and adjusting some goals might be rewarding for the museum in the longer run. In this case, we can assume the result was a win-win, as the volunteers get to do what they enjoy the most, while the museum get the information it need the most.

## PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

One of the volunteers from the historical society remarked to me that a main outcome of the project was that the people involved now were meeting each other regularly to chat and drink coffee while they were studying old photos. In this way the project is not only about working with old photos, but has in addition developed into some kind of social institution. The historical society was not a marginalized group in strong need of being included in society, but it is easy to imagine that participatory projects like this may be a handy tool in working with social inclusion of groups that in some ways have the experience of being marginalized. Refugees, immigrants or youth subcultures may be examples of such groups. In participatory projects museums can take advantage of their social, as well as cultural capital.<sup>7</sup> As museums in general work with documenting the society as a whole, this opens up for a wide range of possibilities to create projects that could engage these groups and

create social meeting places, something museums also can benefit from in their documentation of society and its historical development.

A case of present actuality is the many refugees who now arrive to Norway to seek asylum. This is most likely a unique moment in our society's history, something that should be in the museums interest of documenting. The refugees need to be integrated in our society, as well as they need something to do and engage in. A museum participatory project can be an option in a situation like this. There are many ways such a project could be outlined. The refugees have exciting stories to tell, they bring their own culture and music, and may have knowledge in various handicrafts. A question of interest is how it is to be an asylum-seeker in today's Norway. Projects like this can be formed in numerous ways. Even a photo-project like the one with the historical society may be possible, as some of the refugees probably bring their own photos or videos with them. However, according to the principles related to participatory projects mentioned above, we should remember first to ask what

they would like to do in order to attain an equal dialogue and establish common goals for a project.

## CONCLUSION

The museums' collections, and the knowledge connected to it, represent a significant source of power, which is expressed through the way museums make use of their collections and knowledge in society. Through exhibitions and activities based on the collections, museums have the power to influence on "truth-regimes" related to our worldview and history. The museums' power rest on its credibility, the ability of museums to closely connect statements, primary sources and thorough discussions. The kind of power museums have also entails a great responsibility, and the most reasonable for museums to do is to use their power to influence social developments that are beneficial for both society and the museums. Passivity in relation to social developments only serves to support the status quo, and will eventually make museums involved in whatever happens.

Two main methods museums can engage in social developments is through exhibition-activities and participatory projects. Exhibition-activities have the power to raise questions and ignite public discussions, as well as changing people's understanding of the past and how the world works. However, it may be less effective in improving relationships between different groups of people, which may be due to the limited degree of interpersonal contact, as well as unequal status among the participants involved. The strength of participatory projects is a high degree of interpersonal contact, and the potential for cooperation based on equal status. However, participatory projects usually don't have the same potential for creating public discussions and influencing 'truth-regimes' in this way.

As both approaches seems to have their strengths and weaknesses, they should be of equal value for museums, and maybe they even can be combined in some way. Anyway, as museums existence depend on a peaceful and sustainable social development, museums have every reason to engage in society and use their power to help it develop in such a way.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Different Romani-groups have been given many names in Norway, for example *Roma, Rom, Romani, Sigøyner, Tater, Fant or Fark*. Most of them have been used by the Norwegian majority and are often perceived derogatory, while other terms have been used by the Romanies themselves. In this context, I have chosen to use the term Romani for all these groups, as they all more or less met the same persecution and fate. (Wikipedia contributors 2016b)

<sup>2</sup> Norway was a part of Denmark at this time.

<sup>3</sup> Akin to a Bailiff.

<sup>4</sup> 'National Unity'; the Norwegian fascist party (1933-1945).

<sup>5</sup> This was a photo-exhibition made by Levanger Museum supplied with objects from Romani culture (Garberg 2009:145). Part of the project was also a slideshow, a teaching program for primary school, and the collection of music and objects from Romani culture (Schlüter 1993, 9-10)

<sup>6</sup> "The more cooks, the better spills"

<sup>7</sup> The terms *social* and *cultural capital* is taken from Pierre Bourdieu (1986). Bourdieu uses the terms primarily in relation to individuals, whereas I use them here in relation to

organizations, such as museums, understood as the social and cultural capital to the people working at the museums.

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## NEW METHODS FOR DISSEMINATION OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE – TRANSMISSION OF AND PARTICIPATION IN DANCE TRADITIONS IN NORWAY

*Tone Honningsvåg Erlien*

### ABSTRACT

De tradisjonelle formidlingsmetodene for dans på museum kjenner de fleste som folkedansgruppers oppvisninger på friluftsmuseer for turister. Denne oppvisningen er statisk og basert på et innlært repertoar av koreograferte folkedanser og fremstår gjerne folkloristisk. Denne opplevelsen gjensker et bilde på en uberørt 100 år gammel tradisjon i å presentere folkedans for turister. Dansens er i utgangspunktet ikke et mål i seg selv, men et middel og verktøy for samhandling og sosial interaksjon. Dette kommer ikke frem i slik formidling. Inspirasjonen til en ny-

tenkning rundt danseformidling på en museumsarena ligger i dette uforløste potensialet for kroppslig videreføring av dansetradisjoner som sosial interaksjon mellom danseutøvere og publikum. Nettopp denne danser- publikum relasjonen i de folkelige og sosiale dansesjangrer er et spennende nytt forskningsfelt innen dansevitenskap og er i seg selv nyskapende gjennom å kombinere forestillingskonseptet med interaksjon med publikum basert på den folkelige dansens opprinnelige bruk som sosial samhandling.

Museumslokalet som arena gir muligheter for fruktbare og inkluderende møteplasser og dialog mellom ulike danseuttrykk og nytt og gammelt publikum.

Å sette dansen inn på museum vil ikke nødvendigvis begrense og ta dansen ut av sine rette omgivelser men gir den rom for å synliggjøres og videreføres i alle de formene vi finner i dag og tidligere, fra scenedans til sosialdans og streetdans. UNESCO konvensjonen fremmer deltagelse og vilje fra tradisjonsutøverne

selv, i dette tilfellet dansere i lag og organisasjoner i Norge. Gjennom aktivisering og medvirkning av lokale dansegrupper i overføringen av den kroppslige kunnskapen og innspill fra publikum kan det testes ut nye metoder for formidling av det immaterielle og foranderlige i dans som kulturarv.

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“Interactive dance dissemination” is an ongoing three years project, and a result of research on different methods for dissemination of dance in 10 European museums, debated in a master theses called “A dance museum – European museums and institutions promoting dance and intangible cultural heritage” (Erlie 2014). The project is a collaboration between the Norwegian center for tradition music and dance (Sff) and MiST – Museums of South Trøndelag, and will develop and produce three interactive dance exhibitions and curate several meeting places on three of the largest museums in Trondheim, Ringve, Sverresborg and Rockheim. It is financially supported by Trondheim Municipality, Sør-Trøndelag County and the Art Council of Norway.

This new project aims to create and facilitate meet-

ing places for dancing, to test and developing different innovative practices, techniques and methods of interactive dissemination of intangible dance heritage and in ways of engaging the audience at a museum that may give good results. Such good results may be manifested in promotion of the aesthetics of social dances, raise awareness of dance traditions and ensure viability, disseminate the dance knowledge coming from the heirs of the tradition. By experiencing something that is fundamental to the context visitors will be drawn into performing themselves rather than watching others do it.

These methods will be comparable with the trends of participation by visitors in dissemination methods in new museology (Vergo 1995) and the intention of UNESCO convention of transmission of intangible

cultural heritage through the local community's involvement (UNESCO 2003). Social forms of dance, where dancing is a tool for socialization, are the main perspective for creating informal meeting places for dance in museum. As the project involves local dance organizations, dancers, museum staff, dance researchers and audience, it creates real interaction in several levels of the fruitful collaboration.

The first exhibition of Interactive dance dissemination, called "Dances in Norway" will open in spring 2016 and aims to challenge the dichotomy social dances versus theatre dances. The exhibitions will partly be based on and disseminate gems from the large film archive at Sff and aim to transmit kinesthetic knowledge to new groups of audiences. The audience will travel through the exhibition, from the known and formal to the unknown and informal. Participation will be conducted through activating the audience in the curation of the exhibition. Before the exhibition, as they can send in their own dance films, during the exhibition by dancing and reacting to the interactive installations and the meeting places

and events and in the end of the exhibition when they answers surveys, suggest topics and vote for choices to be discussed while curating the content of the two next exhibitions in this three-year project.

This article, on the other hand, will point back to findings from research conducted for a master thesis, a fieldwork consisting of 10 researched museums. It will project how new museology can correspond with the aims of the UNESCO convention of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and by an imagined setting test how performer-audience interaction methods in dance performances can challenge the museum conventions.

The intangible essence of dance as cultural heritage is only present in 'knowledge about' and 'knowledge in' movement traditions (Bakka and Karoblis 2010). 'Knowledge in' is achieved only through learning the dance tradition; by embodying the dancing in your own body. But the findings show that the standard method of dance dissemination in museums that most tourists know is folk dance group performances in open-air museums, particularly in the Nordic

countries. The continuation of the invented tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) of staging folk dances from early twentieth-century Norway is seen to be representing an institutional dissemination whereby the host museums – museums entrusted with custody- protect their own tradition and history of folk dance group performances. Even if this almost 100 years old tradition is appreciated by tourists, it should change according to new museology trends where visitors participate and communicate during the museum visit (Black 2012).

As a suggestion I will draw a picture of a new method of presenting dance history, how museums could try to emphasise a more dialectic and dialogic dance history by shedding light on a living tradition. I will draw upon concepts of folk dance performance, interaction, community performance, spectatorship, in theorizing a manifesto for a new kind of activity in the sphere of performer-audience interaction. This article wants to problematize the author's experience with folk dance groups dancing and performing in open-air museums in Norway and to suggest a new

method where the narratives are curated to invite visitors to dance themselves.

## BACKGROUND – 10 MUSEUMS DISSEMINATING DANCE NON-INTERACTIVELY

The background for the new three-year project is a master thesis (Erlie 2014) that draws on a basic multi-sited ethnography from 10 museums in Europe promoting dance knowledge and performances, and examines dissemination and curatorial practices. Museums visited were The Romsdal Open Air Museum, Skansen open air Museum, Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm, Technical Museum in Stockholm, Dansmuseet in Stockholm, the Paris Opera, Pompidou centre, The National centre for dance in Paris, The Flamenco Museum in Sevilla and The Flamenco House in Sevilla.

The thesis proposes a contextualisation of dance as intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in the field of new museology. It discusses the researched means

of dissemination compared to the principles of 'New Museology' and the UNESCO Convention of ICH. In relation to dance and ICH this is a field in its infancy and must be further debated and developed. Some of the questions that were answered in the thesis were what belongs to the museums' responsibility with regard to working with the intangible cultural heritage convention, which new methods can the 'new museology' offer of preserving, promoting and transmitting intangible cultural heritage, and which common principles do 'new museology' and ICH have and can these provide a realistic foundation for innovative creative enterprises.

The thesis concludes after analyzing and reflecting upon the research means of dissemination that numerous museums still lack the orientation towards people in action and a place for people to socialize through dance. A number of the chosen fieldwork institutions do not justify any of their work with the implementation of ICH Convention. The dissemination methods included dance as folklore performances, photographs, paintings, books, Internet databases,

text, costumes, masques and films. The only museum with a hint of participatory methods was the Flamenco Museum through interactive multimedia rooms and promoting flamenco classes.

### UNESCO CONVENTION OF 2003

*"The purposes of the UNESCO Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage are:*

- (a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;*
- (b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;*
- (c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;*
- (d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance.*

*For the purposes of this Convention,*

- 1. The "intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge,*

*skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.*

*2. The "intangible cultural heritage", as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:*

- (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;*

- (b) performing arts;*
- (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;*
- (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;*
- (e) traditional craftsmanship."*

(UNESCO 2003)

A link between UNESCO Convention of 2003 for safeguarding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage and museum work can be found in Article 13, 14, 15 and 18. They have in common their focus on extrovert strategies for promotion of the Convention's aims, raising awareness, encountering the audience and communities, and establishing programs and activities, but the convention states no direct strategies (Kurin 2004).

This recent topic was on the board for the annual meeting of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 2004 and has not been taken up since in this forum. Which role can museums play today and in the future of combining ICH convention and museum challenges, development and principles? Au-

thors from the symposium of that meeting suggest new museology to make a crucial part of this rethinking, but that further research concerning limitation and strengths of how museums deal with this subject in exhibition, collections and community should be conducted. Clear suggestions were that media, technology and innovation should be applied to adjust the heritage to new context and local needs should be the basis for the creative transformations. Discussions centered upon the need for participatory museology, inclusion of communities and rethinking of curating and envisioning museums as cultural centres, a public space for sharing idea and dialogue (Alivizatou 2008).

#### TRADITIONAL DANCE

Today we meet traditional and social dance in a museum setting only on a stage, as an event separate from the curatorial narratives. Staging traditional dances for new audiences has been used for transmitting and revitalizing historical dances among folk dance movements on the European continent. The perfor-

mance is usually based on a learned fixed repertoire of choreographed traditional dances that give a static picture of folklore. The host museum's perspective is that the dance group disseminates the museum's over 100 years old tradition of presenting traditional dance for tourists.

First off, the cognitive ideas and emotions in action in a performer-audience connection do not include the notion of any kind of interaction. Although, one point of this conception is paramount: that dance addresses communication and that performance is action in accordance with its rules (Hanna 1983). Many folk dance groups today base their whole existence on training for the summer activity of selling their performance product to tourists, to dance and perform on a stage. This does not coincide with the traditional dance's aim. In the Nordic countries and Europe in general, the folk dance's main aim and purpose was to serve as a form of socialization, of togetherness, and performances were only a tool (Bakka 1978, Bakka and Biskop 2007).

Outlining the ethnochoreological categorization of

folk dances as either participatory or presentational, folk dancing is linked to folklorism in how dancers address the issue of communication. The difference in quality in these two dance typologies is participatory dancing containing spontaneous, not prepared processes of dancing, whilst the presentational model manifests itself as a planned product. Viewed structurally, the former includes more nuances in movements, touching and eye contact, the latter focusing on larger phrases and formations. Distance from the spectators is also an important factor and one related question, then, is whether folk dances in today's context need to be staged in order to be interesting? Is it not, then, that a uniform illustration of a specific culture is projected and not a dialogical one? These challenges are common in cases of nation building and folklorisation (Nahachewsky 1995).

Another view on representation is to view dance as both 'reproductive' and 'productive', a denotation of dance that both reflects heritage and coherently, by opposing heritage, defending and denying stereotypes aiming to stimulate innovation. 'Reproduction'

would defend and transmit earlier embodied knowledge, while 'production' denies stereotyped dancing and presents qualities in new forms. This triggers questions of preservation form, which basic qualities of heritage should be preserved and how far do artists need to go in producing creativity. An example is of how tourism effects the dissemination of Spanish flamenco dance, through the corruption and commercialization of the form. This leads to the creation of a standardized picture of the embodiment originally implied in flamenco dancing (Reed 1998:521).

In this case it is interesting to include 'aesthetical principles' (Kaeppler 2003). Aesthetics of the body are relational, subjective and culturally determined and she argues for evaluation being the main aesthetic principle, which can be understood as being based on norms and values. This again means that we do not unconditionally share aesthetic experiences if we do not know the same cultural canons. For tourists coming to an open-air museum in a foreign country, witnessing a folk dance performance, it will thus be hard to understand the meaning and contexts

invoked. Concerning folk dancing, the aim is not to evaluate whether it is good or bad art, but rather to understand those social relations enabled in the actual act of dance. As I will argue and suggest later, by putting folk dance on any form of a stage, whether this is a shared space of individual experiences or a traditional limited theatre stage, we can challenge the western theatrical dance forms' aesthetic principles and seek to substitute these with other types of aesthetics.

To put these thoughts in line with the trend of participative museum dissemination, we need to ask: Do traditional dances in today's context need to be staged in order to be interesting? How is the content of Scandinavian folk dances as motifs, steps, aesthetics and relations, as traditionally being non-linear, being used as a form of expression? Or, in a historical view, is it more important to disseminate how folk dance has been projected as a staged performance in open-air museums? Which social relations do we want popular dance to promote? How can a change of focus towards the aesthetics and social aspects of tra-

ditional dance add positive changes to dance dissemination in museums today? Natural aspects, including learning, participation and improvisation should be a part of this. How can new museology methods help to curate, transmit and promote the participatory aspects of social dances in reality?

#### NEW MUSEOLOGY METHODS AND THE UNESCO CONVENTION OF 2003

New Museology is a concept clustering ideas and practical attempts to give museums a new direction. The main idea is to strengthen museums' social role in its activities and aims – as a meeting place. It represents a turning away from objects being the main communication tool. New Museology (Vergo 1989) represents a new focus on a people-centred and action-oriented democratization of museum practice, different from the old focus on methods and techniques. Museum planning is now concerned with satisfying the visitors' expectations and reaching

out to people with different knowledge backgrounds (Hooper-Greenhill 1992).

Post-museums, defined by Hooper-Greenhill, contain innovative practices to create different perspectives; exhibitions will get new standards, more workshops, events, discussions, storytelling, performances, tacit knowledge and real cultural events. A new form of stage can easily manifest itself in dissemination methods belonging to the trends of 'new museology' (Hooper-Greenhill 1992). These trends promote the active, participating visitors taking part in a three-dimensional visit, consisting of a holistic adventure of knowledge, activities, amusement and experience. Hooper-Greenhill also states that meanings and interpretations are not static factors, but constantly created and recreated (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:214). Knowledge is best produced in a real empirical event. Museums may be seen as spaces that decrease the gap between the private expert area where knowledge is produced and public spaces where audience can be found. One solution museums use today is the oral dialogue as the best possible way of communicating

the differences and create new knowledge from the audiences' ways of experiencing, and in some museums they go as far as producing the exhibitions in the actual encounter of expert and audience (Hooper-Greenhill 1992).

'Participation' constitutes a bottom-up approach, which is also acknowledged as a principle for UNESCO activities. This represents a transformation: from the museum operating as autonomous institutions to better include communities' involvement in its choice of memory to disseminate (Kreps 2003, 2008). This again leads to a deeper exploring of the museums' role as cultural interlocutors looking into the communities that the museums are trying to represent, an act of social engineering.

Performance of social dance exists in living people and their bodies through memory. According to the UNESCO convention the renewing potential in a performance is more important than durability. With this point of departure ICH favours transformation and renewal over authenticity and conservation. If ICH can be disseminated as a process, a lived,

evolving interaction by the engagement of communities, then using museum as a dynamic cultural centre (West 2007, quoted in Alivizatou 2008:52), suits trends very much vital in the new museology's extrovert dissemination practice and aspects. New Museology trends parallel well with the 2003 Convention in representing means of continuing and curating a functional practice while sustaining important intangible qualities of the heirs of the cultural heritage.

If reflecting upon why social dance can benefit from being realized in museums and why museums can benefit social dance, two perspectives are crucial. First, the museum can by building up strategies as an interlocutor with its communities and local dance groups serve as a meeting place and dance locale<sup>1</sup> where heritage is transmitted by a well communicated performer-audience interaction in a transparent locale – that facilitate open and available spaces for dancing. Social dance may, by promoting social dance in an informal cultural historical setting as an activity for public health, as taking a trip to the museum is an cultural activity many groups in the society have on

their list, increase the values of the dance realization as a regular activity to a broader audience. Placing dance inside a museum setting may help emphasize dancing as a tool that bring people together and make people talk by the informal aspect that make people dance. On the other hand, dance in a museum context will help break standard museum conventions and bring interactivity in real action in museums. Dancing will also maintain and support museums contemporary social and pedagogical role as cultural institutions in modern society. A goal is that museums will become a place for regular visit and use by local dance groups and communities and by this perform interactivity in form of dialogue, participation and inclusion among museum workers, dance scientists, dancers and audience.

#### A D A N C I N G M U S E U M

'A dancing museum' (Charmatz [no date]) as a part of an institution where there often is dancing as a part of a museum context, would inherit both physical and

mental conceptualizations. By transferring this ideology to work on dance in open-air museums it will be significant to open up for both dialogical and dialectical dimensions of the form of dance dissemination. There should be room for embodied participation and collaboration mentally by dancing with another person.

Choreographer and curator Boris Charmatz and his "Manifesto of a dancing museum" (Charmatz [no date]) makes an interesting picturing as he contextualizes the arguments for why dance can find a reasonable setting inside a museum. Contemporary meanings of museums can modify conceived ideas about both dance and museums; they are alive, inhabited, often include a virtual space for dance to be realized practically, aesthetically and spectacularly. In reality this could mean, as earlier suggested, an open space for informal use as a dance floor, with actual dancing. Such a dissemination space could inspire, by surroundings and artefacts, dancing by all visitors and be put alongside the open-air museum's main narrative. Dance makes the concept of a living museum broad-

er; obtaining this requires abandoning the norm of what a traditional museum is. Charmatz points out that the spirit of a dance museum is present before the actual space, which for Charmatz is a place where audience brings life and where programmed events are rare. Martin Spangberg supports this perspective even though he is a little more skeptical (Spangberg 2012). For Spangberg, the future of dance in the museum is not something we will look at, but which is exchanged and personally customized and experienced. It is nothing that should be in need of production, consumption and circulation of values, but needs to be made for the context, the museum itself.

'Participatory art' is defined as a form of art that require the viewer to be physically present in the work in order to appreciate it. In general terms "the kind of participation in the work that participatory art requires is public rather than private, actual rather than virtual or imaginary" (Novitz 2001:248), but that comprehensive appreciation of participatory art demands both internal and external responses (Novitz 2001).

One important factor in succeeding in making participatory art is to promote the artist's role of being a facilitator of others, something which is often manifested rather as a manipulator and motivator. In this way it is the status of the curator that gains credit in organizing such experiences, and the fear is that of an institution overshadowing the work (Barok 2009). It is then fruitful to bring in a new perspective, to accurately distinguished between participation and collaboration. The former implies that the participants are subjects to the artist's, the lead dancer's or the guide's parameters for the performance while the latter includes co-authorship. Community art seems to have better obtained the horizontal line in such artistic projects. Bishop argues for an emphasis on the meaning of the process instead of the medium and product quality in aiming for horizontal artistic practices (Barok 2009).

#### PERFORMER - AUDIENCE INTERACTION NTNU - IN AN IMAGINED MUSEUM SETTING

An inspiration and methodological departure is research conducted by Department of Dance Studies at NTNU, Norway on 'Performer-audience interaction'. This study has developed ideas and methodological suggestions for an interactive dance performance based on traditional Norwegian dances. In the study's resulting show the audience was invited onto the dance floor stage to participate in a partly pre-determined social setting by the performers. There was no differentiation of audience and stage and through a variety of traditional dances and rhythms the audience experienced co-authorship, watching dance from new perspectives and being on the same stage as the performers, dragged into the social sphere of a traditional dance floor. Interaction and participation are amongst the main factors and purposes of Norwegian traditional dances, and those were used in the performance setting with the aim of challenging ha-

bitual behavior norms concerning the audience role ensuring that the audience has a good time while participating. In a museum setting this can challenge the curatorial practice. The following example will test this interactive method in a museum context (Karoblis et al. 2015).

#### EXAMPLE: THE DANCE HALL SKOGHEIM AT SVERRESBORG FOLK MUSEUM

A good empirical event could be illustrated as presenting a type of entertainment encouraging the triumph of museum logic, as found in postmodern museums (Davis 1995). That is the idea of mixing a living museum's maintenance of their historical mission, with constraining visitors' behaviour as a theme park would place the target visitor in participatory role and will require engagement with the subject and matter. By experiencing something fundamental to the context, visitors will be drawn into performing themselves rather than watching others do it (Davies

1995).

'To curate' means to take care of (Latin). In acknowledging this, it is important to ask whom we are curating for and how we can curate exhibitions that both understand and respect the heirs of the traditions, the dancing itself and the audience? Little of what I experienced during my research fieldwork to 10 museums could be relevant for providing a fruitful and sustainable term for how to execute this. My proposed term 'Dance museology' can represent a way of curating dance dissemination activities as meeting places for dance groups members and dance enthusiasts that want 'knowledge about' and 'knowledge in' dance. This could take place in a locale with a social function: a place where people can practice, feel affinity, dance for the personal dancing own sake or for a participative performance. Indeed, dance has a natural way of creating community in the actual realization of the dancing.

Could one curate a participatory experience, give the audience a path through a live dance exhibition space that inspires to dance? Would a dancing mu-

seum, as visitors join a live dance event, where they are facilitated by co-dancers at non-specific times, be realized as the tourists are dancing with representatives from local dance groups, taking the embodied curatorial artwork with them in their bodies? And how can we practically transmit the real embodied knowledge through museum dissemination? In couple dances of any kind there is always a rhythm, a bounce or in Norwegian, 'svikt' (Bakka 1970). At the Norwegian center for traditional music and dance we use the "svikt"-system to analyze archive material and embodied movement structures to transmit dance kinesthetically to new generations. Experienced traditional dancers and dance researchers learn by analyzing film material and copy, execute and test the same movement in our own body, then put words on the movements, and while dancing with new people you then transfer the insight in embodied knowledge to a new body in form of rhythm, structure, movement quality of the traditional dance body, body position and variations in patterns. To revitalize or bring into use knowledge from film clips of old dancers danc-

ing the tradition differently than it is danced today, the factor of dialogue between the dancers, the heirs and the academics is vital to consider how traditions change from past to present.

This article suggests that an interactive dance exhibition will manage to transmit embodied dance knowledge through new methods and tools that may generate more interest among new generations. But most importantly, the realization of the dancing is still essential. Therefore, curating meeting places between dancers and non-dancers in an informal transparent locale is invaluable when curating a social dance atmosphere in culturally and historically right museum contexts. To exemplify, following is an imagined setting of dance dissemination where the level of interaction demands participation by both dancers and audience and where they share the roles of sender and receiver. How does this method affect the transmission of embodied cultural knowledge? Can tourists understand the aesthetic principles of traditional dance and the historical and cultural context better by experiencing it themselves in the correct?

Sverresborg, Trøndelag Folk Museum, is one of the oldest and largest open-air museums in Norway, built on the same model as the two oldest ones, Skansen in Stockholm and Folkemuseet in Oslo. It contains over 70 old houses mainly from 1600s and forward, but the museum is founded on the ground of the middle-age castle built in 1183 by King Sverre. The museum has two departments, one old town with houses from Trondheim city and one rural department with farmhouses from the district. Very recently in Sverresborg's 100 years long history, the museum raised the youngest house in their collection, a dance hall called Skogheim from a valley south of Trondheim. This public gathering place was built in 1934 and its normal activities were maintained till recently road changes forced the house to move or get taken down. The original use of the house includes Christmas parties, Easter, religious gatherings, singing, concerts, cinema, bingo, cabaret etc. Sverresborg museum aims for using it as in once was used, among others as a dance hall, reconstructing old dance parties with live music. In accordance with the museums pedagogical

programs there is possibilities for creating activities for transmitting intangible knowledge from the period 1940-1970 to school classes and groups of visitors (Erlien 2011).

Imagine a summer day, the guided tour is just to finish, you are at the last stop, Skogheim. Inside Skogheim there is a live band on stage, the time is between 1 pm and 5 pm on an everyday during summer season. Sitting areas and coffee tables fill the corners and along the walls. Experienced dancers and musicians are dressed in normal modern clothes, bringing the aspect of a living tradition into the setting of a dance hall from the 1950's. Every half an hour a new group of tourists accompanied by a guide pops in as the end of their regular guided tour in the museum. Since this setting represents an era most adults today recognize or even have memories about, the tourists can hear the music to dances like springer, pols, foxtrot, swing, tango, twist and shake, waltz, schottis, polka and slow walking dances. For each new group the experienced dancers invites them into the floor, without following any specific pattern but inviting the

tourists to collaborate in dancing to the rhythm of the music. After a 15 min session with new dances and new couple-formations, the tourists may stay as long as they want, sit down having a cup of coffee, go dancing themselves and witness another tourist group experiencing the same introduction to traditional dances as they just went through. The refreshment of old embodied dance knowledge and new knowledge happens informal on the dance floor, with rhythm as the only collective instrument between the audience and the dancers.

In this way, the audience is invited into a socio-cultural sphere originated in the 1950's dance parties Saturday night. America inspired music and the dance hall as an informal arena. The distance between the dancers and the audience is reduced by the invitation to social dance together and helping each other to recall previous embodied steps and patterns. This form of transmission, dancing with another person and copy without using words, is also the best method for learning children new forms of movement patterns.

This example describes a level of interaction,

where dancers and audience share the roles of sender and receiver. Transmission of dance knowledge, simple steps and basic social dance qualities, is sent and initiated by both the 'co-dancers' and the tourists. The impact of the aesthetical experience and dance choreography is capable of offering much more with the dialogue being twofold. Common rhythm is in this case the only leading aspect that unites the dancers. Performing the same steps is not a condition needed to dance together, as long as rhythm is united in the dancing bodies. Audience and co-dancer are equal as interlocutors and every dance dialect/variation is allowed performed. Moreover, the transmission inhibited is unintentional, in contrast to for example dance instruction. Another beneficial factor of the latter is the non-reliance on a specific location; the stage is manifested in the realisation of the interaction in the actual dancing. In an innovative sense, one may maintain the tradition of having an audience while simultaneously trigger the contact-generating potential in traditional dances.

The example might be located in the liminal space

between an event and an installation. It is not departing towards similarities with the traditional picture of a folk dance folklore performance, clearly intended towards selling a cultural product, being an object of aesthetic judgment based on form and structure. If it were seen as an installation constellation, it would need to inhabit stable time and inanimate material that stays around. This would limit the concept of dance, which inherits instability of time and change in coherence with specificity in subjects, not objects, creating immaterial products of action (Spångberg 2012). The latter example may be similar to an interactive installation by the audience reacting and responding to someone placed in the museum on purpose (hired co-dancers) but not be locked as a site-specific event. The difference is clearly that the act is mentally constructed by choices of action by subjects, audience and co-dancers on an immaterial floor space that could manifest itself wherever. Moreover, adding and applying relational aesthetics, participatory art and new museology dissemination methods to this borderline may amplify dance in mu-

seums as an interlocutor for an individual and subjective, horizontal and participatory practice transmitting embodied knowledge. Creating, temporarily, communities within each dancing couple and within the limits of the social dance sphere, provide a space for individual expression but in a collaborative aesthetical practice.

It is perhaps more adequate to describe it from another position; by dancers creating a source of interactive social contact and presence in the dance, which has its power out towards the so-called audience, so that the dance, the objects, the room and the audience have a collective function and purpose of wanting to dance and embody the musical rhythm. In this way the emphasis is on creating the reciprocal living presence in the dance, in the blurred lines of being both dancer and audience. On such a social dance floor this would be the norm, no one are categorized as only performers and others as audiences, everyone may enter the two roles as they wish.

## CONCLUSION

As dancing traditionally was not used and perceived as an action for exercise, but as a method and tool for togetherness and social interaction, choreographed folklore performances do not promote the historical qualities of social dancing. The dance appears as a backdrop of the experience tourists are given in open-air museums. This opposition; the folk dance group performance representing non-interaction with tourists and the folk dance used in its original context as interactive, opens up a potential and inspiration for innovation in thinking about dance dissemination in museums. This potential involves the museum as an arena for transmission of embodied knowledge of dance traditions as social interaction between dancers and local dance groups and the audience. In Norway and the field of dance science, especially within artistic research on folk dances, the performer-audience relation appears as a new source of unreleased potential for interactive dance performance where folk dance motifs and structures form the chorographical

point of departure. The combination of the concept of interactive performances and integrating the social dance principles on stage is innovative in the field of dance art.

The museum as an arena brings space for fruitful and inclusive meeting places between different forms of dance expressions and new and old audience. Putting dance inside a museum will not necessarily limit the dancing and bring the dancing out from its original settings but add room for presentation and transmission of all the forms of dances we know in Norway today. The UNESCO convention of 2003 promotes participation and willingness coming from the local dance practitioners, which in this case are dancers in organizations and societies in Norway. Through participation and involvement by local dance groups in transmission of the embodied knowledge, and contribution from audience, Interactive dance dissemination explore new methods for dissemination of the changeable factor in dance as intangible cultural heritage. These are methods that are valuable for other museums and archives in Norway.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The term 'locale' is useful as a descriptor for the social worlds wherein museums operate. Defined by Giddens (1979:206-7) it refers to a space as a setting for interaction and the idea reflects the multidimensional nature and link between tangible, intangible, cultural and natural heritage. Boundaries within a locale create regions demarcated by time-space relations and varying in degrees of boundedness.

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# BUILDING A NEW MUSEUM COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

*Mirela Iancu*

## ABSTRACT

În prima parte articolul tratează felul în care au fost armonizate metodele de cercetare și de implicare a comunităților locale în viața muzeului, parcurgând pașii necesarii schimbării atitudinii nu doar în abordarea cercetării ci și în munca în muzeu în general.

Studiu de caz legat de cercetarea de teren în comunitatea de rudari din satul Poiana, comuna Perișani, județul Vâlcea, reface drumul cercetărilor anterioare din perioada anilor 60, încercând să creeze un nou context cultural pentru gospodăria de rudari reconstruită în muzeul în aer liber. Interesul princi-

pal, după mai mult de jumătate de secol, nu îl mai reprezintă meșteșugul în sine ci oamenii care trăiesc în această comunitate și mai ales felul în care muzeul este sau poate deveni relevant pentru aceștia. A fost aplicată metoda dialogului, dezvoltată împreună cu partenerul de proiect, care a adus rezultate deosebite, îmbogățind nu doar perspectiva istorică asupra colecțiilor cât și pe cea contemporană, prezentând evoluția și adaptabilitatea acestei comunități de-a lungul timpului.

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## CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

ASTRA Museum functions in a multiethnic, multicultural, multiconfessional Transylvania and serves a community similarly diverse. Even if part of its four museums (ASTRA Museum of Traditional Folk Civilization – the open air museum, ASTRA Museum of Transylvanian Civilization, *Emil Sigerus* Museum of Saxon Folk Art and Ethnography, *Franz Binder* Museum of World Ethnography)<sup>1</sup> display collections belonging to ethnic minorities in Romania, the efforts for highlighting the multi-ethnic feature of cultural heritage collections were not mainstreamed, leading to low rate of acknowledgement of their importance and value. The project *Open Heritage*<sup>2</sup> involved different methods and techniques of research and dis-

semination of the existing collections in order to re-contextualize them for the public.

ASTRA Museum of Traditional Folk Civilization is one of the largest open air museums in Europe with ethnographic profile and displays more than 350 buildings and more than 20,000 goods of cultural importance from all over Romania. Established at the beginning of 60's as a Museum of Folk Technology (preindustrial) heritage, during a historical period when the communist nationalistic movement was at its peak, it focused mainly in presenting the technical genius of the Romanian peasant, as reflected in its tools, implements and work processes. Structured in a very thorough thematic way, it presented, typologically, every technical aspect related to producing food (up to milling), processing of raw materials

(wood, clay, metals, ores, animal and vegetable fibers) with the workshops, sawmills, felt mills and groups of complex installations. The main focus was on the work process, on the tool, on the different techniques and on the final products. To that, by late 80's, it was added the aspect of living conditions, presenting, together with the work environment, architecture and households, the everyday life. It was the rendering of an imagined rural life, set in beautiful surrounding scenery. A program for researching and promoting the intangible cultural heritage was set forth at that time as well.

In the last five years, ASTRA Museum started to shift the historical paradigm of museum work towards investing in programs that enhance the cultural life of communities and encouraging people to make culture and traditions an active part of their everyday life. By getting involved in different international projects and cooperation activities, the museum enlarged its perspective in dealing with collections and communities.

The *Open Heritage* project renewed the coopera-

tion with Museums of South Trøndelag (MiST), established during a previous EEA Grants financed project<sup>3</sup>. The goal of the joint actions was to reinforce the cooperation between ASTRA Museum and MiST through common documentation and research activities. Both museums aimed at discovering and raising awareness on how mutual understanding can be improved by acknowledgement and promotion of the multicultural heritage. The mutual challenge of the partners was a change in how the museum addressed, represented and communicated with the communities they serve with a stronger focus on contemporary society.

## THE COMMUNITY

ICOM places the museum at the heart of society and its development<sup>4</sup>. The changes in society made museums change according to the changing needs of the communities they serve.

In our common understanding, ASTRA Museum's community can be divided into two wide categories:

the community inside the museum and the community outside the museum. Any attempt of change should simultaneously address both. We will analyze who the various groups were addressed by the Open Heritage project.

### The community inside the museum

Generally, it is a community made of the entire body of museum experts and professionals. As respect of our research, mainly curators and staff engaged in dissemination activities are taken into account.

They were invited to step out of the one-dimensional context of meaning and consider re-interpretation of the existing collections with a multi-ethnic perspective approach. A first step in this direction was taken during the writing process of the Open Heritage project, when all the monuments on display in the open air museum were subjected to a new analysis. It proved that just questioning about the ethnic origin of each is enough to highlight features of the collection that were missing before. In terms of dis-

semination, 18 monuments were included in the *Path of ethnic minorities*, a symbolical trail that adds the multiethnic key to the understanding of collection in various ways: interpretation program, cultural animations, educational activities, special signage, new museum texts etc.

But it was not only the ethnic re-assignment of these monuments that was gained during the research. The curators in the open air museum started a research in the collections previously attributed to the ethnic majority and discovered that a Romanian homestead had at least 15% of the inventory coming from different other ethnic groups<sup>5</sup>. There have been found objects with different utility (practical, ceremonial) for different ethnic group. This is a good starting point for better understanding the intercultural relationships, the exchange and mutual influences in multicultural communities. The fieldwork in such communities benefited from the same opened approach.

It must be stated though that the aspects related to the identity of each ethnic group will not be replaced,

but nuanced by the new findings and the mix of influences will be regarded as a defining trait of different groups living and working in a cultural landscape they shaped together.

### The community outside the museum

Within this category we can find the communities the museum and the museum work directly addresses: visitors (different types of beneficiaries of cultural services) and rural communities (the communities living in the villages of origin of the monuments or the former owners of the heritage items).

#### Audiences

Since we are not talking of a newly emerged museum, but of a museum with a long history, the efforts were pointed towards strengthening the interest of the visitors in the museum collections and cultural activities by highlighting the multi-ethnic feature and at the same reaching new audiences.

The dissemination methods were meant to open

up the museum to creative and participatory experiences for the visitors. There have been created different interpretation plans for the monuments on the *Path of ethnic minorities* that were put into practice during the high season through a cultural animation program. The ‘actors’ were members of such communities, invited in the museum to either perform their crafts and sell their end products or perform different customs and traditions, by engaging the visitors in learning experiences. Thus, the event in itself was genuine, different each time and participatory. The visitors were able to engage in dialogue with the animators and became co-creators of their own museum experience. The animators and visitors together created new approaches on the existing collections in manifold ways, constructing during their experience new meaning for the exhibits. It was a great means of communication as equals between museum, communities and visitors.

The overall gain of the new dissemination methods can be summed-up in:

- Mediating the contact between museum visitors

and representatives of the multiethnic communities,

- Re-contextualizing tangible cultural heritage by creating pertinent dissemination context
- Highlighting the living intangible heritage by adding value to people and living traditions, not to re-enactment of old, dead phenomena taken out of the museums storage

The effects of the new dissemination methods were positive. There has been recorded a constant increase in the number of visitors, an increase in the frequency of visits for the local audiences and an increase in the period of time spent in the premises of the open air museum. Still, the real impact of the new dissemination methods is under evaluation and the final conclusions will be drawn at the end of the implementation period.

#### The Source Community

Museums are also responsible and should “work in close collaboration with the communities from which their collections originated from as well as those they serve”<sup>6</sup>. It is not for the sole purpose of documenting

the collections, but also for building inside the source community the feeling of belonging: collections still belong to the communities and the communities belong in museums.

In this respect, ASTRA Museum developed a program for working with the rural communities, offering support and counselling in heritage preservation, in an attempt of giving something back to those who contributed to the museum collections. Events for promoting one community happen on a regular basis in the open air museum; members of the local community are always the most important guests to the opening of a new monument, gastronomy events, educational activities for heritage promotion are organized in the villages, as well as temporary about their own heritage in ASTRA Museum’s collection.

During the Open Heritage project, initiating a giving back attitude for those community that are considered the source of collections undertook three major directions:

- acknowledging and correctly attributing the ethnic value to the existing collections

- highlighting the relevance of communities in re-contextualizing the collections
- focusing on contemporary society
- focusing on people, living intangible heritage, in a relationship of mutual respect and understanding

This aspect will be dealt with in detail further on in this article.

The community of the partner museum

Since the project and the research were developed in a partnership; our aim was to find the relevance of the realities in focus for ASTRA Museum that can be translated and adapted in order to be understood in the Norwegian context. Working in a different cultural context needed a different approach; the national cultural frame of reference that usually guided our museum work was not to be applied identically in the relationship with our partners. For the success of the partnership actions we needed a harmonized approach both on research interests and methods and in dissemination. The partnership turned into a capacity building action for both museums.

The communities inside the two museums needed to be on the same line of work, to have a common interest in the project. Seen from outside, the two museums had different interests in research: it was documenting cultural history of minorities in Romania and documenting recent labor migration in Norway. It was the same method – the dialogic interviews – and the common dissemination of results that harmonized the work.

It started from the prerequisite that museum work is relevant in the whole realm of cultural work and the cultural knowledge leads to greater understanding of ourselves and our communities.

In the attempt to further document our collections we always had in mind the way in which collections are going to be communicated in a different, international frame of reference. We stepped out of our comfort zone and stopped preparing just for the Romanian visitors. It was the shift in perspective that we needed to also make our museum's heritage more accessible to the international visitors of ASTRA Museum.

Organizing the common exhibition was considered from the relevance perspective: why should our source community of *rudari* from Poiana (a national minority) should be relevant for the community of the partner museum and how can we make relevant the labor migrants community on Hitra to ASTRA Museum's community.

In order to harmonize the bilateral research we had to understand each other's approaches, and then develop a common approach.

#### A STUDY CASE IN THE *RUDARI* COMMUNITY FROM POIANA, PERIȘANI, VÂLCEA COUNTY

##### **Argument**

At the beginning of the 60s several researchers from the Brukenthal Museum – the folk art department, conducted a series of field researches on a community of Roma craftsmen, the *rudari*, from the southern part of Sibiu County and the northern and central part of Vâlcea County. This resulted, in 1968, with

the acquisition and transfer of a rudari homestead in the newly open Museum of Folk Technology. In 1983, due to precarious conservation, the entire homestead was dismantled and put into storage, until 2014, during the Open Heritage project, when the homestead was restored and re-introduced in the open air museum. For most of the people working in ASTRA Museum today the first contact with this monument was through the museums archive and storage, blue prints, pictures, notes from the previous researches. No curator from that time was still alive to share the experience; no contact with the local community was maintained during the years. The newly restored monument needed a context to tell the story for the contemporary visitors. It was chosen as a study case for the join documentation activities.

##### **Step 1 — Harmonizing (defining) the concepts / setting the limits**

Although at first it seemed as an internal need of ASTRA Museum, further documenting the *rudari* homestead became a common issue to be addressed

in similar ways by the two museums. Besides being one of the exhibits in the Romanian open air museum, it was appointed as one of the focus points in the common exhibition. The same assumptions are valid when talking about the migrant community on Hitra island.

The challenges we had to deal with were different museums (museums functioning in different cultural and socio-economic environments), different approaches, and different realities.

The complexity of the realities on the two geographical entities (the island and the village) are easily reduced to maps, charts, figures of all sort, official history in the textbooks or works of scholars, elements that usually don't speak much about the common people, that do not reflect their common preoccupations, common everyday fears. Those changes that were recorded in an official way (usually by authorities, in maps, charts, censuses) are of little or, sometimes, no importance for such communities. Their life goes on with or without them. What they consider to be reality, at grass root level, their perceived reality,

is in fact what should be documented on both sides, in order to be relevant for contemporary museums and their audiences.

The research interest of the partners had been split in different proportion between collections and communities: ASTRA Museum focused more on documenting collections; MiST Museums focused more on documenting communities' recent history. Also, field work seemed to be the method of research most commonly used by the Romanian partner, while interviews were preferred by MiST. As a balance, the two museums set the aim of finding the relevance of collections for communities and relevance of communities for museums.

The partners had a different understanding in ethnic diversity: for ASTRA it was about national minorities and for MiST the key interest was migrants' communities (recent minorities). In our understanding a national minority is a group of people with ethnic, linguistic cultural and/or religious characteristics and which has long ties to the country of residence. In the same respect, migrants are considered a group

of people with ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious characteristics and which are just establishing their ties to the country of residence.

### **Step 2 — Take a look back – the secondary data analysis**

The documentation work started in the archives. There have been analyzed different resources preserved in the archives of ASTRA Museum– any kind/type of data collected before the project (monument's blueprints, the scientific archive and database of the museum, the complementary archive, photos, drawings, ethnographic literature, statistics and reports from previous researchers).

The area of our secondary data analysis was not restricted to the village Poiana or to the *rudari* community, for better understanding the context we searched for all data related to the ethnographic area Țara Loviștei, to which the village belongs, and all the confluence points with the neighboring areas and phenomena.

The scientific archive (mostly field notes from the

research conducted during 1961-1962) and the complementary archive (pictures from the same period) were the most conclusive and useful sources for this study. The other cited sources were equally useful for different other purposes related to the Open Heritage project: supporting the restoration work, preparing new interpretation and education program, documenting for the exhibition etc.

All sources proved the initial theory that the former research was focused more on the phenomena rather than on communities. The field notes were only presenting the processing stages of the craft, the materials and tools they worked with, lists of end products they made, places and ways of selling the products. There was some mentioning about the families that lived there, but only the name of head of the family, probably the craftsmen. The notes were combined with additional drawings or sketches on techniques and decoration.

The conclusions from the analysis of the pictures taken during those researches were similar: the main focus was on the processing stages, techniques and

decoration of the end products, the habitat, surroundings and some local markets where they sold their merchandise. Only few pictures capture the researchers at work together with the community. The captions of the pictures were not conclusive, being too short and having little or no metadata related.

Yet, we have noted the ethnic assignment was correct— clearly stated in the justification for the acquisition: ethnic group – *rudari* (Roma)<sup>7</sup>. During the same campaign, Romanian communities have been researched as well, many of the data recorded at the time contained mixed information about the two ethnic groups. We are not sure it was a multi ethnic research, but more likely, for time economy, both ethnic groups were surveyed in the same field trip.

As a conclusion, the analysis of the secondary data couldn't provide us with conclusive evidence on the nature of the previous researchers' attitude towards and the relationship with the source community.

### **Step 3 — Reflect over collections / re-interpret secondary data**

We treated this attempt the same way as rebuilding an exhibition with the same artifacts, but in a different historical and social context. Having studied the collection and all the resources in the museum, we had to think about how relevant they are to the contemporary audiences and what more was needed to find the right key to translate. In order to provide a proper comprehension of the past phenomena, re-evaluation and re-interpretation of the existing collection needed to be done in a more subjective way of looking at things, by putting back in the picture the members of the community that were once overlooked.

We couldn't reflect over the existing collections without getting back in touch with the source community. Since the analysis of the archive resources was not conclusive on how the museum-community relationship functioned in this case, if at all, we had to find out ourselves, stepping on the footprint of the founders of the open air museum. After we re-connected with the former museum community through

desk research, after we connected with the new museum community through cooperation in the project, we had one more link to reestablish: including the *rudari* community back into the dominant narrative of the open air museum. We needed to prove that the museum is no longer stuck in the past, but it is a cultural institution tuned in with society, with strong connections to the present, connected with the needs of today's communities.

### **Step 4 — working with communities**

The museum, through its activities, becomes the focus point of the territory it reflects and serves. Keeping the contact with the community is one of the key factors for achieving this goal.

For the purpose of this article, the main goal of this attempt was keeping the social roots of heritage in order to legitimize the museum's own relevance for community. Engaging in a living relationship with the source communities was done before, in several attempts: ASTRA museum always invited representatives of the source communities to the opening of

the new restored monuments (here included not only the former owners, but everyone that lived or still lives in that community) and transforming that into a museum – community event. There is also another program, mainly intangible heritage oriented, The Fair of Local Communities that transforms a village community into the special guests for a weekend in the Country Market area (a participatory event mainly around the food traditions, but also around crafts, singing and dancing). A special relationship was noticed with the donors of, usually, buildings that take a great pride for having their former house/mill in the museum and come and visit it regularly, together with friends and relatives. They usually kept strong relationships with the museum workers who contributed to the transfer and restoration of the monuments and paying a visit to the museum usually means visiting their museum friends as well.

From the museum - community building relationship angle, during the research we were interested to see if the museum was/still is relevant for a community that we lost contact more than 45 years ago. We

wanted to see if there are still people who can at least remember that a long time ago, one of their houses got sold and transferred in a museum in Transylvania and if someone ever questioned about its status. And we wanted to achieve this through the dialoging method developed together with the partner.

Three different categories of community members were targeted to be involved in our dialogue during the field trips in the rudari community from Poiana:

- The descendants of the former owner of the homestead, mainly his son still living on the premises of the village, Doru Grozavu,
- Other members of the rudari community, some craftsmen,
- Romanians living in the same village, simple inhabitants and village authorities.

We came to the village with our own predetermined image, created from researching the museums archives and we wanted to see what the current situation was. We constructed our own image over this community, seen through the eyes of former researchers and their recordings. In order to offer the

locals the same level of understanding over our museum, we brought along most of the museum's publications and pictures from the open air museum. The old museum's guide books<sup>8</sup> had a description of the *rudari* homestead, but the newest ones, starting with the beginning of the 90's, since it was no longer on display, didn't. It was not our best business card as a museum to try to reestablish a relationship with a source community that wasn't even mentioned in the basic presentation materials.

From the former owner's family we managed to meet and talk to one of his sons, one of his daughters and his daughter-in-law. When we started talking with Doru Grozavu, the son of the former owner of the house, we found out that actually he visited the museum several times to see the house, but then he stopped. When younger, Doru studied in a vocational school in Sibiu and then got a job in the city and lived there for some years. It was one of his colleagues' favorite leisure times to take strolls in the Museum of Folk Technology and Doru must have told and showed them his house. He even recalls the others joke about

it: if he's ever to be kicked out of the boarding school, there will be no problem since he has his own house in the museum. Back then, it didn't seem funny, but now he remembered it with a smile.

For his family, selling the house to the museum was of great help. Doru remembered that apart from the money his father earned from selling house, pigsty, goat shed, chicken coop, tools and furniture, he was also commissioned by the museum to dismantle and reconstruct everything on site. So he has been working inside the museum for rebuilding his house in the new cultural location. He also remembered that the museum people were so kind to pay him (not sure if all or part of the money) in advance to start building a new, larger, house for his family and even more, they allowed to keep and use the old house until the new one was ready. This story we could connect with two of the pictures taken during the reconstruction works in 1968 and, later identify the person in the picture as his father, Gheorghe Grozavu. Just as a mentioning, he was not interviewed in the former researches and there are no other traces of him in the archives of the

museum apart from the contract of sale and the two pictures.

At some point in the dialogue with Doru, the museum was held responsible for the presumed destruction (on the first visit from March 2015) or sale (on the second visit from April 2015) of the homestead, together with its objects. Even if we 'submitted' a detailed report on the situation, that due to poor conservation, it was dismantled piece by piece and put into storage for over three decades, he would not believe it until we presented solid evidence. At a new visit we came with printed pictures of the reconstructed house and with the objects preserved in storage. The issue was not easily forgotten and the mistrust in the museum as caretaker of his father's/family's/community's legacy was once again questioned: the tools he saw in the pictures were no good, therefore they must have been snatched by somebody, a museum worker, that must have taken them home and replaced them with used, unworthy copies. It was then only that he realized that actually it was his father the one who sold bad tools to the museum because he kept the

good ones for himself, to be able to work further after rebuilding his house in the village. And, as he was a little ashamed, he went to the attic and fetched his father's tools and explained the difference in quality.

Doru was not the only member of the family that visited the museum. His mother and his younger sister Geta went once, but after both parents died, it was too emotional for Geta to see the old house. She was very emotionally attached to her parents and the house, even if she wasn't even born at that time, was the idealistic image of her young parents. A very emotional outburst happened during our last talk with Doru, when we brought copies of all the old archive pictures. Together with Doru and his wife, we were looking through the pictures, just talking about old times and, occasionally identifying new people from the community. Among those pictures there were two, taken just in front of the house, where two young women were weaving baskets. Doru identified them quickly as being his mother and his aunt. Also on the doorstep there was Puşa, his older sister and Ştefan, his older brother. The other sister, Geta,

was witnessing our conversation from the other side of the fence, doing some house chores in the backyard. Doru asked her several times to come and see the pictures, but she said it would be too much, but when she finally did, she couldn't help crying. She has never seen a picture with her mother so young and the family didn't have any pictures from that period. Looking through the pictures had a positive impact also in documenting our collections and improving the metadata we had. We managed, with the help of Doru to identify some more characters in the photos and even to correct some of the captions. Even if we have noticed that one person in different pictures was named differently or placed into a different village, we couldn't tell which was the right name or the right village. This new layer of information we got from the community was added as a correction of previous records.

Also, we were very interested to see how many people still performed the craft in the village. It was a very short search since Doru was the only man that still knew how to work with wood in the village, but

he only made toys or mended things, he was not actually practicing the old craft although he had the abilities and still kept his father's tools.

When questioning about the wood processing craft we found out that the women in the village were mainly basket weavers, they made all sort of baskets out of hazelnut tree or poplar branches. The women's craft was not mentioned in any of the documents we found in the museum's archives, yet, for the same period of research most of the women were earning a good income from making and selling baskets. Maria Ciobanu is the last of them, still working now and then, only on special orders, although there are three other women who still know how. They claim that there's no market for baskets to ensure a steady income, so they raise cattle and farm their land. Both Doru and Maria were encouraged to try making some extra products to be sold in the museum's shop, but it seems that we've been pushing too hard to do something they no longer want to do.

The Romanians, the majority living in the village Poiana, felt proud that there was something from

their village exhibition in ASTRA Museum, even if it belonged to the rudari heritage, it was no questioning about the representativeness. The local authority, especially the mayor, was very enthusiastic about strengthening the cooperation with the museum, mostly when talking about cultural tourism and expertise in building a local museum. From the same municipality, Perişani commune, ASTRA museum has an oil presser from Mlăceni village, currently on storage and from the same ethnographic area, another oil presser from Boişoara and from the village Racoviţa, just close by, an oil presser with battering rams, on display.

## CONCLUSIONS

This entire experience, starting with adding the multi-ethnicity layer to collections during the Open Heritage project, proved that new means for building communities in and around the museum must be developed. Special attention should be paid not only to building new audiences, but also to empowering

source communities, for keeping the social roots of heritage alive, for keeping the museum's relevance for the community and increasing the sense of ownership

people have for museums. Minorities or people with migrant background are categories of public usually overlooked that have high potential for our museums.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> www.muzeulastra.ro

<sup>2</sup> www.patrimoniudeschis.ro

<sup>3</sup> www.conservareapatrimoniului.ro

<sup>4</sup> archives.icom.museum/definition.html

<sup>5</sup> Items originating from the Roma community were among the most common everyday objects used in rural areas

<sup>6</sup> ICOM *Code of Ethic for Museums*, p 10

<sup>7</sup> Arhiva Muzeului ASTRA, Dosar de monument nr.94, *Gospodarie-atelier de rudari*, Localitate: Poiana, com. Perișani (VL)

<sup>8</sup> See *Ghidul Muzeului Tehnicii Populare*, 1974, Sibiu, p. and *Ghidul Muzeului Tehnicii Populare*, 1986, Sibiu, p.

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- — — ICOM *Code of ethics for museums* (2013) p. 6
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# SURVIVAL AND ADAPTATION – THE CASE OF ROMA FIDDLERS COMMUNITY OF CLEJANI

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## ABSTRACT

Atestată în țările române încă din secolul al XVI-lea, tagma lăutarilor, este una cu care rromii au fost cel mai adesea asociați până în zilele noastre. De-a lungul anilor, din membrii acestei bresle s-au ridicat reprezentanți care au atins o adevărată faimă, intrând în legendă, arta lor influențând și compozitori de muzică clasică cum ar fi Franz List sau George Enescu.

În apropierea Bucureștiului, la Clejani s-a născut și s-a dezvoltat o adevărată tradiție în muzica lăutărească. Pentru mulți dintre rromii din Clejani, muzica

a fost mereu o meserie din care și-au câștigat existența și încă continuă să o facă. Au trecut de la simpli lăutari de țară, la mari și prosperi lăutari de capitală sau, în plan internațional, au ajuns chiar actori de filme. Se spune că în sat au mai rămas doar cinci lăutari autentici, chiar dacă cei tineri se ocupă tot cu muzica. Au îmbrățișat însă alte genuri. Fuziunea cu alte genuri muzicale subliniază de fapt aceeași capacitate de adaptare care a marcat evoluția și care a adus faima strămoșilor lor.

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### CLEJANI, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL LANDMARKS

Clejani, located in the northern part of Giurgiu county, crossed by the river Neajlov and at a distance of about 45 km of Bucharest, the capital of Romania, at first sight leaves the impression of a typical settlement of the Danube plain, nothing special setting it apart from other surrounding towns. However, in the nineteenth century, things were different. Clejani enjoys a rich cultural and historical tradition. Although first documented in 1522<sup>1</sup>, the real founding father of the settlement is considered to be major Serbian Anastasevici Mişa (1803-1885), influential businessman and philanthropist, who bought the Clejani estate and established his residence here starting 1853<sup>2</sup>.

It is recalled that, since the early years of the nineteenth century, many lowland villages around Bucharest were inhabited by important communities of Serbs and Bulgarians (the latter being also called Serbs the by local people), settled here because of the instability South of the Danube caused by Ottoman rebel pashas and Serbian revolutionary movements, these south slave populations being fairly quickly assimilated by the local mass, only few groups preserving their identity to our days.

Major Mişa, as the locals call him even now, built a mansion and an inn here, extended the school (that had been built in the first half of the century) and provided for it, transforming it in a school of arts and crafts, the first of this kind in the country and a model institution. None of these things are preserved today.

The only testimony of the bygone glories remained the church of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel, founded by Anastasevici. Built in Western style with interior painting made by Gheorghe Tătărescu, a classic Romanian painter, it is a very imposing worship place for a village church.

The richness and generosity of the Serb penetrated the local folklore. There still is a ballad about a hypothetical looting of Major Mişa by an outlaw<sup>3</sup>. He organized many banquets and similar events in his residence in Clejani, attended by the members of the Bucharest elite. Music was provided by professionals in the field, brought from the Austrian Empire. Their presence inspired and probably spurred the locals, who were devoted to music, making them deepen their virtuosity and repertoire, which gave birth to a real tradition transmitted from father to son. It is a tradition transformed into craft, that will make this place famous beginning with the interwar period and will become a specific feature of the Roma population in this area.

## THE ROLE OF FIDDLING IN THE ROMANIAN MUSIC

The fiddlers have a long tradition in Romania. The name of the first documented fiddler is found in a document issued by the office of Wallachian prince Peter the Young (Petru cel Tânăr), addressed to one of his noblemen in 1568<sup>4</sup>. It was about a Roma fiddler servant. Fiddlers would form a unique population within the Roma community, being somehow privileged, although slaves, they enjoyed greater mobility and relative freedom.

The etymology of the term fiddler indicates a musical instrument, lute, originally denoting people playing a stringed instrument. Although not only Roma people were fiddlers, (there were also Romanian, Turkish and even Hebrew fiddlers), fiddling will be early identified and associated with this community. Thus, the scholar ruler Dimitrie Cantemir says that the fiddlers “are almost always Roma”<sup>5</sup>, fiddling appearing as the craft itself. Throughout the Middle Age to modern times, foreign travelers to the Roma-

nian Countries will make frequent references to these musicians, their presence in lords’ and boyars’ courts being constant. As an attribute of their prestige, great nobles from Transylvania, Moldavia or Wallachia usually had several fiddlers among their retainers, being interested and investing in training and perfecting them. In this respect, they brought professional musicians from the Western world or from the Ottoman Empire.

Unlike other categories of artisans, fiddlers had different forms of organization. Since the late eighteenth century, fiddlers are organized in guilds, both in Moldavia and in Wallachia<sup>6</sup>. It was also in this period (late eighteenth – early nineteenth century), that several representatives of the fiddlers’ guild, who would enjoy a well-deserved notoriety, stood out. Names as Angheluță, but mostly Vasile Barbu, simply called “The Fiddler” became a legend. This one impressed the famous Austrian composer Franz Liszt, who was visiting the Romanian countries, with his musical skills.

During the following decades, in the gallery of out-

standing representatives of fiddlers others will add, considered by the public true guardians and promoters of Romanian folk music. Celebrities such as Sava Pădureanu, Angheluș Dinicu, Christache Ciolac were attracted by the authorities in campaigns to promote the image of Romania abroad, being also present at different universal exhibitions in the Romanian pavilion, their benefits enjoying full appreciation<sup>7</sup>. Emile Monod, one of the organizers of the Universal Exhibition in Paris, which took place in 1889, declared enthusiastically that Romania is a “country of fiddlers”<sup>8</sup>. The virtuosity and art of many fiddlers was appreciated by classical music composers as Franz Liszt, George Enescu or Bela Bartok.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, fiddlers were some of the most efficient agents of Romania’s modernization. The perception of Romanian music nowadays is opposite: fiddlers seem to be more connected to the East than the West. Compared to the first decades of the nineteenth century, Western music had infinitely more ways to conquer the Romanians tastes, the fiddlers appearing rather as keepers of

an ancient Romanian tradition.

In the interwar period as well, fiddlers would try to develop forms of organization within formal structures. Junimea Muzicală was one of the companies of fiddlers at that time and enjoyed a remarkable influence. In 1933, it became part of “The Romanian General Association of Roma People”, with both cultural and social ambitious targets<sup>9</sup>. The involvement of company of fiddler in such an enterprise denotes the high social and economic level they had reached. Organized in this way, they could deal not only with practicing the craft, but also with improving the status and image of their ethnicity.

Fiddlers’ music was not at everybody’s taste. Critical voices began to be heard since the beginning of the last century, accusing the fiddlers that they distort and trivialize the Romanian authentic folklore. It is the period when ideological currents such as ‘Semănătorism’ and later ‘Gândirism’ appear, promoting a folk, autochthonous and traditional art, for the purpose of rediscovering the Romanian soul, those who were attracted by such an ideology being

less willing to appreciate the creations of other ethnic groups in Romania. The great historian Nicolae Iorga was also dragged into this controversy, stating in one of his study work that the music performed by the fiddlers “has nothing to do with the Romanian folk music”<sup>10</sup>. If the term ‘fiddler’ previously referred to those who addressed a popular repertoire, this word began adopting the meaning of ‘musician by ear’ starting from then on, with clear pejorative connotations as compared with that of a professional classical musician. However, fiddlers’ music continued to capture the public’s attention during the interwar decades too, when a number of talented artists, such as Luca Fănică, regularly appeared and enjoyed a unanimous appreciation both nationwide and abroad.

It is hard for a non-specialist in musicology to precisely define the term of fiddle music and to determine what are the differences between this music and, for example, folk music. The fact is that the music we are talking about was subject to continuous development, starting from the first entry of the Western musical influences in the Romanian countries. Oriental

imprint has remained however distinctive, currently being easily recognizable. In terms of content, this music varied according to the period, the region and the tastes of those who requested it, whether boyars or masses. Due to the fact that fiddlers were almost unanimously Roma, the question arose of a gypsy music synonymous to the fiddle music, which made the problem of defining of these terms even more complicated. There is no broad enough consensus to this very day as to what fiddler music phrase means. Styles often overlap and the lack of a clear distinction between musical genres is impossible. The sure thing is that fiddle music is a complex one, those involved in it inspiring from several genres, influencing and being influenced by the Romanian folk music.

All the names which were listed above are associated with the term of city fiddler, and the songs used by classical music fiddler composers are of urban origin. However, fiddle music will also evolve in the rural world, in particular since the mid-nineteenth century, when the slavery was abolished in the Romanian Principalities. Therefore many fiddlers settled in ru-

ral areas, seeking to enter into commitments on the occasion of weddings or of various public holidays. At the same time, a number of ‘ursari’, persons who were dealing with domesticating the wild bears, who subsequently were required to dance in rural villages or at fairs, embrace the fiddle music after their craft has disappeared mainly under the pressure of authorities<sup>11</sup>. They were already known for their music skills, thus the transition occurred naturally, bearing witness to fiddlers’ ability to adapt.

#### CLEJANI – TRADITIONAL CENTER OF FIDDLE MUSIC

There are rural localities populated by compact communities of Roma people that still practice the fiddling. Here are just a few examples: Almașu (Sălaj County), located in Transylvania, Zmeu and Zece Prăjini (both in Iași county), located in Moldova. All fiddlers across the country have some common features: the practice of fiddling in groups, more than individually, the improvising, the spontaneity, the

transmission of the craft from father to son, the orality, etc.

Thanks to Zece Prăjini (*Ten Poles*) band, Clejani is probably the best known example of a fiddler community, being an internationally recognized center as well and a breeding ground of valuable musicians. The locality of Clejani, capital village of the commune with the same name, has a population of 2600 inhabitants, of which about 860 Roma. Speaking of the Roma fiddler community in Clejani, the first thing that draws the attention is their location in the village. This location has been recognized about two centuries ago and the street where this community lives is now called *The Street of the Fiddlers*. This thing shows the recognition of a traditional occupation. Next to this street lies the so-called ‘Gypsy’ or fiddler slum. The presence of Roma people in the village is mentioned in a document dated 1580, which refers to them as slaves on the boyars’ estates<sup>12</sup> and subsequently mentioned as workers on the Mișa Anastasevici’s estate. They lived on agriculture and brick making. Fiddling starts to become a secondary occu-

pation complementing in an optimal way the main agricultural occupation.

While there are many similarities with the development of other centers of fiddlers in the country, there are elements that imprinted particularities to the local fiddlers. As mentioned above, Clejani was an important rural settlement in the nineteenth century, located in a strategic point, on the right bank of the Neajlov river, at the crossroads of major trade routes. One of the roads that linked Târgoviște to Câmpulung and Brașov (a major commercial center in the South of Transylvania) to Giurgiu (a major Danube port) cut through this locality. Furthermore, a road linking Bucharest to Slatina and Craiova passed through the northern part of the village. All these, but especially the location of the village near the city of Bucharest have resulted in a population wealthier than that of the neighboring villages, which to a great extent contributed to a rapid change in the mentality of many well-off locals, as well as to the enrichment of the local fiddler musical repertoire.

It should be noted that Roma people who have

dealt with fiddling in Clejani were rural fiddlers, at least almost up to present, a fact that is confirmed by the veteran fiddlers in the village. The differences between a city fiddler and a village one are notable. The public to whom the village fiddlers addressed were exclusively from rural areas, fiddlers succeeding to perform in city bars only by exception. All in all, fiddle music remains a folk, as well as urban music, but also a social music that provides, to some extent, a detailed analysis of the daily life on the city. This can be noticed in the repertoire of Clejani fiddlers, who were influenced, either directly or indirectly, by the musical compositions originating in the Bucharest’s slums, the songs of which were widely spread in the countryside as well.

From the information viewpoint, the above aspect has been perpetuated mostly in the last century, when the Clejani fiddlers’ recognition, including at the international level, has become more obvious. The center of the Clejani fiddlers has been known since the interwar period and the interest in their music grew over the postwar decades, when the well-

known musicologist Gheorghe Ciobanu published a study entitled “The Fiddlers of Clejani” on the specific repertoire of this village and that represents the fruit of many years of on-site research. More recently, a special attention to this subject was paid by the ethnology-musicologist Speranța Rădulescu<sup>13</sup>, because in the 80’s of the past century many musicians from Western Europe, especially from the Francophone regions, started to express their interest on this subject. During the communist era, the fiddlers from Clejani did not succeed in leaving the country, because the authorities preferred to favor official folk bands in order to promote a cosmetized image of Romania. The situation changed radically after the collapse of the communist regime, when the restrictions disappear.

Based on several audio recordings made by Speranța Rădulescu with the fiddlers from this place in the early 90’s, two Belgian music producers have selected the most dynamic and virtuous musicians in the village under the name “Band of Clejani Outlaws” or “Taraf de Haidoukos” as this band became known

especially in the Francophone countries, where they obtained their first success. The band becomes emblematic not only for the fiddle music from Clejani but for this South-East European music style.

This band that will know international fame was composed of the following members: Gheorghe Moțoi, Florea Basaru, Petre Manole, Nicolae Neacșu, nicknamed ‘Culai’ Dumitru Baicu, Gheorghe Anghel, nicknamed ‘Caliu’ and Marin Sandu, nicknamed ‘Țagoi’. All these fiddlers performed abroad after 1990 and participated as actors in various movies, of which *Latcho Drom*, directed by Tony Catlif, berbero-Roma born French filmmaker. This documentary was selected at Cannes in 1993 on the topic of the Roma’s journey from the Indian subcontinent to Western Europe.

Of the old fiddlers, 65-year-old Marin Sandu, nicknamed ‘Țagoi’, still lives in the village. Descendant of a family with a long tradition in fiddling, he is the son of the most famous Clejani fiddler, Nicolae Neacșu (‘Culai’), who, besides his father, was a founding member of the famous band previously mentioned

and the main source of information about the history and evolution of local fiddling. He was a skilful master of accordion and violin playing and a talented vocal performer as well.

The concerts abroad and the appearances in movies would change fiddlers’ way of living and thinking. In time, they became more aware of the value of their music. Despite his success in the West more than two decades ago, fiddle music remained little known in the country. Țagoi has in his repertoire a few hundred pieces thoughtfully memorized, some of the fiddlers being both musicians and composers. Inspiration came from reality, but also from the shady or marginal environment (the name of the band is not by chance, the location of the village is at a crossroads of trade routes, attracting many robbers or outlaws who seek an easy gain by robbing the travelers or the locals), or from the love, shared or not, or other feelings. Culai’s composition called “The Ballad of Ceausescu” or “Ballad for the Dictator”, composed under the influence of events related to the change of political regime at the end of 1989, serves as proof of the involvement

in the current realities.

The musicians were organized in folk music bands, but around the Second World War, the term ‘gang’ was preferred, another reference to semi-interlope entourages. The transmission of the craft was made orally from father to son, only men being involved in this craft. Despite the impression that we have now, women were not co-opted into the country folk music bands. There were exceptional cases where women worked just as vocal soloists. The reason why women were not part of folk music bands was not sexual discrimination, but is based on the fact that the craft could be dangerous, sometimes the parties rapidly degenerate, the first victims being the fiddlers, that were subjected to different types of aggression. The music sang by fiddlers was transmitted orally, keeping the melodic line, even if the influence of each musician tuned into personalized interpretation. Children learn the craft naturally without being forced by their parents.

Companionship appeared mainly between members of the same extended family. This is how the high

birth rate in the community can be explained, the fiddlers pursuing that every child learn how to master a different instrument, so that, in time, they would form a folk band composed only by members of their own family. Of the old fiddlers, very few were able to read musical notes. Their descendants instead, who wanted to embrace a music career, followed specialized studies. Țagoi is the father of seven children, most of them graduates or students of specialized schools, but none follows their father’s career.

The number of members of a folk band may vary, but the violin and the dulcimer never miss. Other instruments used are the accordion and the bass (name that locals give to the double bass or cello). The brass instruments or the guitar are rarely used. In the last decades, the accordion, borrowed from German music, has asserted itself permanently, gradually replacing the lute (cobza) from the fiddlers’ arsenal, an instrument with which the fiddlers were associated years ago. In recent times, there was only one lute player in Clejani. The leader of a folk band was usually the violinist who also played the role of conductor

during performances. He was the one people looked for in order to sign contracts. If there were more than one violinists in a folk band, the role of conductor was played alternately by each of them to keep away tensions. The most talented, but also the most eccentric fiddlers searched new ways of performance and execution, for example playing with horse hair, a style popular in Clejani a long time ago<sup>14</sup>, that became emblematic for Nicolae ('Culai') Neacșu.

Although they assume the Roma identity, the fiddlers from Clejani have mainly addressed a repertoire in Romanian language which they use in their day-to-day life, although occasionally resorted to Roma language, in general there are not so many similarities with a conservative Roma community, both in terms of folk costume and of organizational structure, although such communities exist around Bucharest city. In Clejani there are not many visible elements to represent the Roma identity. Moreover, throughout the country, the Roma fiddlers sing in Romanian or Hungarian (in areas with a predominant Hungarian population in Transylvania).

During the past decades, the folk music bands of Clejani were employed to create an ambiance at weddings and funerals, therefore these events were their main source of income. In that area, a wedding usually began on Saturday morning and last until Monday evening. They also sang in the village bars. There was a custom both in Romanians and Roma communities: fiddlers were present at funerals, but, apparently due to the church opposition, restrictions have been imposed to this community, in the present the custom of singing at funerals being associated exclusively with the Roma community.

The repertoire is varied; it includes songs from different backgrounds and ages and even if the new generations have taken it over from their old ones, it was and still is subject to continuous renewal. There are different song categories sang: ceremonial songs (wedding, funeral), doinas, ballads, slum songs, dance songs. At Clejani, dance songs are generally instrumental, voice is not used while dancing. Instrumental tracks are a good opportunity for fiddlers to display their technique. The rich and varied rep-

ertoire is a distinctive mark of those in Clejani since ancient times, given their contact with Bucharest and also their coexistence with various other populations in the Danube plain. Thus, the contact with the Bulgarian population resulted in borrowing some dance songs, too, origin of which is confirmed by the name 'Bulgarian'<sup>15</sup>. Numerous other influences came from the Turks.

Because of the reputation they enjoyed, the area the fiddlers moved around from Clejani was quite large, but not exceeding 30-40 km from the village. This area could also spread over other important nearby fiddler centers. Along with those in Clejani, the fiddlers from Bolitin Vale were being considered those with the 'cleanest' style. The fiddlers could earn their living only from these activities and they, not needing to practice other crafts.

During communist times, most fiddlers were recorded in various folk music ensembles or in the village agricultural cooperative, but the fiddlers were able to continue their work as freelancers too. Țagoi doesn't remember to be pressured in this regard, a

freelancer license granted to him by the mayor exempted him of worries, while others eluded the system the same way. Singing at weddings could not provide for a comfortable life anymore. Starting with the communist era, the first signs of the craft's decline are seen. Some natives from Clejani established in Bucharest remember that once they arrived in town and engaged in work, they didn't show interest anymore in learning to play a musical instrument, the art of fiddlers craft being considered a degrading occupation.

#### CLEJANI IN OUR DAYS, SURVIVAL AND ADAPTATION

Currently, the rural world, the environment in which the folk music bands work, is increasingly less conducive to provide for a decent living to musicians. At weddings, the favorite playing location for fiddlers, their music is not as desired as before. They are hired only to accompany the bride's itinerary from home to church with their music. These requests are more

common than those of singing during the whole wedding, but are not satisfactory for any fiddler in financial terms or in terms of valuing them as artists.

Once electronic means to play music for a low cost emerged on the market, fiddlers invitations to sing on events decreased. Recently, one may notice some interest for the fiddlers' music, due to a relative media coverage, but those who can provide genuine and quality fiddle music remained only a few. Paradoxically, there is demand for this music in urban areas, the old fiddlers being invited to perform at various events held in Bucharest, the audience being part of the urban elite who wants, from nostalgia, a trip back in time. However, these short-term events do not really satisfy the fiddlers, since this cannot provide an adequate financial comfort, Țagoi complaining of numerous shortcomings. The life in the community is more than modest, regardless the success of some fiddlers.

Immediately after the First World War, Gheorghe Ciobanu counted 78 Roma fiddlers in Clejani. Țagoi claims there were around 30 in the late 80's, referring

to those who sang for a living exclusively, in the present, Țagoi considers that only five authentic fiddlers (including himself) still live in Clejani. There are many more musicians in the village, but they have adapted to new trends, while the elder have remained attached to the traditional repertoire and fiddling specific classic instruments. The truth is that many people living in the slums know how to play an instrument and are familiar, at least superficially, with traditional repertoire. Besides them, a numerous local musicians play in different more or less traditional bands in Bucharest and countrywide. Clejani has become a guarantee of quality in traditional fiddler music and other artists seek to be associated with this name or rediscover their origins here.

The fiddlers of Clejani are, however, a possible model of successful adaptation to economic changes of recent decades. The success is largely due to unforeseen events, such as their promotion by foreign agents in the West and in tournaments or due to production and recording of audio materials.

If during recent decades, the songs played by fid-

dlers are based on the old songs, which they learned from their parents, along with the change in the demand for music types and focusing more professionally on the market, the fiddlers had to learn new songs belonging to other musical styles. During the 50's of the last century, people in Clejani were acquainted to rumba, malagamba, conga, waltz<sup>16</sup>. As required by the public, these musical styles had to be learned by fiddlers, even if they were not especially attracted to them.

Researchers estimate that fiddle music will sensitively change in the near future, more precisely the sound will become electronic and it will have a precise and monotonous rhythm. This will only be a new attempt to adapt to the requirements dictated by the new public taste, but the influence will be short and will be soon replaced by another, although not assimilated, because music protects its classical elements. Fiddler music is quite complex in terms of style and is quite complicated to draw theoretical boundaries between this style and folk music. The music played by fiddlers promptly absorbed most diverse influenc-

es from other proximate music styles.

Today, the future of traditional fiddle music does not seem very bright. But there are plenty of signs of a growing interest and a reviving movement in order to recover the musics' relics of the past and bring them back to public attention in a new shape and as faithful to tradition as possible. There are art events dedicated to this kind of music, for example the Folk Music Bands and Fanfare Festival, which is an itinerant action, organized in collaboration with various cultural institutions, aimed to promote the music of country folk bands.

Recent successful examples are also found in Clejani. Folk music bands are still setting, and musicians originating in the village work in successful bands. We mention here Aurel Ioniță, the leader of the Mahala Rai Banda, a band appreciated both in the country and abroad. He was born in Clejani and is related to famous musicians here. By the music promoted with his band, he continues the tradition rooted in authentic fiddle music, but combines it with other styles and influences. Although he lives in Bucharest, he returns

to his hometown, where his father lives, to search for inspiration.

In the present, the merger with other music styles emphasizes the adaptability of these musicians, thing

that marked the evolution of their ancestors.

For many Roma in Clejani, music is and has always been a profession of which they have earned their living.

## Notes

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<sup>3</sup> Ciobanu Gheorghe, the cited work, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Ghenea C. Cristian, *Din trecutul culturii muzicale românești*, București, Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor din R.P.R., 1965, p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> Cantemir Dimitrie, *Descrierea Moldovei*, București, Editura Minerva, 1986, p. 143.

<sup>6</sup> Poslușnicu Mihail Gr., *Istoria muzicii la români*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1928, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> Cosma Viorel, *Lăutarii de ieri și de azi*, București, Editura Du Style, 1996, p. 150, 152, 160.

<sup>8</sup> Vlad Laurențiu, *Imagini ale identității naționale (România și Expozițiile Universale de la Paris, 1867-1937)*, București, Editura Meridiane, 2001, p. 146.

<sup>9</sup> Năstasă, L.-Varga, A. (ed), *Minorități etnoculturale. Mărturii documentare. Țigani din România*, Cluj Napoca, 1919-

1944, CRDE, 2001, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Iorga Nicolae, *Muzica românească în Muzica românească de azi*, București, Cartea Sindicatului Artiștilor Instrumentiști din România, 1939, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Grigore Delia, *Curs de antropologie și folclor rrom. Introducere în studiul elementelor de cultură tradiționale ale identității rome contemporane*, București, Credis, 2001, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup> Ciobanu Gheorghe, the quoted work, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Rădulescu, *Speranța, Taifasuri despre muzica țigănească*, București, Editura Paideia, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Ciobanu Gheorghe, the quoted work, p.148.

<sup>15</sup> Idem, p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> Idem, p. 64.

# ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION ASPECTS AND RURAL ECONOMY PERSPECTIVES IN THE LINGURARI COMMUNITY IN ZAGON, COVASNA COUNTY

*Dana Botoroagă Bercu*

## ABSTRACT

Comparativ cu restul teritoriului țării, *Secuimea* se caracterizează printr-o altfel de structură etnică, și anume, printr-o compoziție etnică inversată, românii fiind, aici, grupul etnic minoritar. Astfel, 60% din totalul românilor din județul Covasna trăiesc în localități mixte, în inferioritate numerică. Conform datelor celui mai recent recensământ din anul 2011, în acest județ se înregistrează 71% populație de etnie maghiară, 21% etnici români, precum și un procent ridicat

de reprezentanți ai etniei rromice: 4%.

Lucrarea de față consemnează diversitatea aspectelor legate de identificarea etnică a membrilor comunității de rromii lingurari din comuna Zagon (prin autoidentificare și heteroidentificare), precum și perspectivele economiei rurale, surprinsă cu tot ansamblul de activități implicate: producție, distribuție și consum.

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Zagon, one of the largest communes in Covasna County, is located in the South-West corner of the County, in the Sfântu Gheorghe basin, in the large valley of Zagon creek (a tributary of the Negru river), at an altitude between 570m and 630m<sup>1</sup>, only 13km away from Covasna city.

Zagon was first documented in 1567<sup>2</sup> with the same name as it has today, Zagon, a toponym of either Slavonic (>Slav. Zagonŭ = furrow), Albanian (>Alb. Zagnë = furrow), evoking the nature of the place, or Russian origin (>Rus. Zagón = enclosure, pen, sheepfold)<sup>3</sup>, evoking the local people's occupation.

The emplacement of the commune at the base of the Bretcu Mountain foothills and, inherently, the wide forested land in the property of the commune favored forest harvesting and logging, which are the

basic occupations of the commune's population, besides agriculture and stock-breeding.

As in other multiethnic places, an obvious spatial separation on ethnic criteria is met in Zagon commune, or due to occupational, cultural or social differences<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the center of the locality is inhabited by Hungarian people, *Oláhfalú* (Hun. Romanians' village) is inhabited by Romanians<sup>5</sup>, and those monickered *Lingurari* by the Romanians in the village and in the County<sup>6</sup> – speakers of Romanian – have settled in a peripheral area, near the forest, in “the District”, but who stay in contact with the other villagers.

Rudarii (mine workers), a category including Lingurari, have always been an enigma and their origin, including the ethnic one, approached by various re-

searchers, still remains unsolved: “aside from the language, which is Romanian, we see a kin of people belonging to themselves, thus completely formed, but who have an unknown origin”<sup>7</sup>.

Beside the correspondent terms of rudar, today known as woodcrafter, Ion Chelcea enumerates “another form of the same meaning”<sup>8</sup>, *lingurar* (spoon carver), “a more adequate term”, used mainly in Moldavia and Bessarabia, and *băeș* (gold washers) or *corfar* (basket maker), depending on the region.

Mihail Kogălniceanu reminded the fact that the Lingurari, “the wood spoon carvers, besides the craft from which they took their name, manufacture all kinds of wood dishware [...], are the most civilized of the four classes, they are even starting to build settled houses”<sup>9</sup>. Armand Guță concludes: in Mihail Kogălniceanu’s opinion, the Lingurari are not gypsies<sup>10</sup>.

Research studies about the Transylvanian Carpathian Roma people<sup>11</sup> include the Lingurari in the Romani ethnicity, their name deriving from the craft they practice. Therefore we can identify a few Romani subdivisions, like: *gabors*, musicians (*muzicanti*),

comb makers (*pieptanari*), goldsmiths (*aurari*), copersmiths (*arămari*) etc. And, not the least, Lingurari (*Kashtali*)<sup>12</sup>. The great majority are settled (85%), sedentary, house gypsies, having given up the nomadic lifestyle.

The commune has 5.489 inhabitants according to the last census<sup>13</sup>, revealing an mixed ethnic composition, apparently balanced, the percentage of Romanians living here (49,59%) being almost equal to the population of Hungarians (49,70%), while only 0,64% acknowledge Romani identification. On the other hand, as a result of a hetero-designation process performed in early 1999, Zagon is one of the localities where the Roma population accounts for over 20% of the total and where the old Gypsy communities have integrated into the local community, yet within a clearly delimited area<sup>14</sup>.

The area, also known as Szeklerland (*Secuime*), is characterized by an ethnic population structure that differs from the rest of the country in that Romanians are the minority ethnic group, so the ethnic composition is reversed<sup>15</sup>. Thus, 60% of the total number of

Romanians in the Covasna County lives in mixed localities in numeric inferiority<sup>16</sup>.

According to the 2011 census<sup>17</sup>, which is the most recent, 71% of the County population is Hungarian, 21% Romanian and 4% Roma. The latter are the second largest ethnic group in Transylvania<sup>18</sup>.

A peculiarity of the Romani ethnic group in Covasna County is the adjustment to the local context, because Roma are either speakers of Hungarian, or Romanian (much rarely), depending on the local context / the ethnic dominant characteristic, their population being much more numerous than registered in the official records.

Furthermore, the fact that the real number of Roma people is unknown is an important issue nationwide.

According to official data obtained by the method of self-designation in Covasna County, although the number of Roma increased significantly during the last years (there are 2,641 Roma registered in 1992, 5,973 in 2002 and 8,267 in 2011), it is visibly smaller than the number resulted by the hetero-designation process in 1997, which is 20,175<sup>19</sup>.

In the commune of Zagon, Lingurari are Romanian speakers and they consider themselves Romanian, the Hungarians include them in the Roma category – *román cigányok* / Romanian gypsies, the Romanians call them Lingurari, neither Romani, nor Romanians, while they consider to be Roma (gypsies) those who live in other area of the village and who are Hungarian speakers: “We’re not, as they say, gypsy, ‘cause the gypsies live near the hill, at the very edge of the village [...] they’re Hungarians, but they do not make (baskets, besoms), they make illegal deals, or something like this”<sup>20</sup>.

Our research revealed a recent trend, rather isolated though, of acceding to the areas inhabited by the others: there are several Romanians settled in the Hungarians’ district, but also a few Lingurari families are spread among Romanians. There are intermarriages between Romanians and Hungarians, but none between Romanians and Lingurari, which is noticeable. Lingurari have a special social standing: they are integrated in Romanian communities by linguistic and religious assimilation, although within definite

spatial limits, even when it comes to graves (in the cemetery inaugurated in 1967) or the place in the church<sup>21</sup>. “We sometimes go there (to the church), not every Sunday, but we go, at least on Sundays, God keep our eyes!, ’cause we stroll the forests, poor us, you know what they say, the young ones not too often, but the old ones, let them go, ’cause old people are old people and will die sooner, so the problem is we go without anyone sending us, we just go, because that’s the way we were taught when we were children”<sup>22</sup>.

According to oral tradition concerning the Lingurari’s origin, 2 or 3 Lingurari families, nomads by that time, were allowed to settle at the edge of the commune, because the communities in the neighboring villages did not accept them. Their longtime habitation in this place is confirmed by Lingurari specific names (Cocicodar, Busuioc, Roman, Boia) found both in the old record books of 1914 kept by the Orthodox Church and among the fallen heroes in the First and Second World Wars<sup>23</sup> (the heroes memorials in the old Church of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, built in 1814). “They are now locals”<sup>24</sup>.

In the first stage of the research<sup>25</sup> I tried to gather information about the outer Lingurari community characteristics. I therefore contacted local administration representatives, including Romani mediators for educational and social issues, as well as representatives cultural institutions in the County (the Covasna County Cultural Center, the National Szekler Museum), I took interviews to the Zagon Romanian Orthodox Parish Priest, I talked to persons belonging to other communities (the Zăbala commune in Covasna County, located 20 km away from Zagon), direct beneficiaries of the products manufactured by the Zagonians. All these consolidated by my personal experience (I have been familiar with Zagonians, as they have been selling their products from door to door since my childhood, in the 90’s) and with the on-the-spot information obtained as a result of the interviews with the Lingurari in the “District”, insisting on manufacturing (working technique, specific instruments, raw materials), but also on distribution and consumption. I additionally approached the more sensitive subject of ethnic identification.

Our research revealed the fact that the Lingurari community is composed of approximately 200 families, of which a significant percentage, almost 50%, are members of the Zagon Romanian Orthodox Parish.

In terms of literacy, we find out that, despite the fact that the old generation was illiterate, children go today to the village primary school, in the Romanian class. The Lingurari specific dwelling type has evolved and the huts in the “District” are obsolescent.

The Lingurari’s life is hard, many of them manufacture birch twig besoms (traditionally made broom), wicker or hazel baskets (around 50 families, that is 24% of the total population), while the spoon-making trade is today obsolete.

“The trade of spoon carving is a subdivision of wood carving and relates to those who used to manufacture mostly, but not limited to, wood spoons”<sup>26</sup>. Gheorghe Costache, in his work *Ocupații tradiționale pe teritoriul României* (Traditional Trades in Romania) makes a distinction between the gypsy wood spoon carvers, who “excel at manufacturing common, func-

tional spoons” and the peasant wood spoon carvers, “who strive that their products become ornamental objects”<sup>27</sup>.

The type of the manufactured objects are determined by both the social environment (they live in a mainly agricultural area, the twig baskets and besoms are in high demand) and the difficulty level of the trade. The Zagonians make particularly besoms and baskets, as such crafts are more accessible, therefore practiced even by women in Zagon.

*“There is no one else work anymore [...] it’s only me who’s left in the whole village [...], they make baskets and besoms all without cease, but the spoon handwork, the wood handwork, it’s only me who’s doing it; I am 62 [...], my son is younger and he will inherit this trade if he wants and likes it”*.<sup>28</sup>

Ion Chelcea<sup>29</sup> divides the Rudari in the Land of the Olt River in two categories, on the difficulty level of the trade, on “the way of working”: one category makes objects with a higher degree of difficulty and the other category deals with objects more easily to be

made, including besoms, baskets etc.

We have the confirmation of the fact that, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, besides besoms and baskets, the Zagon spoon carvers manufactured functional spoons, troughs, bawls, scoops, rolling pins “for rolling noodles, for mixing the polenta”, even spindles for wool spinning, which they would eventually sell in the neighboring villages<sup>30</sup>.

Other similarities between the Zagon spoon carvers and the Rudari in the Land of the Olt River can be distinguished on the young population behaviour: “the boys have forgotten the trade, especially the young ones. They go to work for the Saxons<sup>31</sup> and prefer to manufacture things that are easier to make, like baskets and besoms. The median age of the Zagonians who still practice the traditional trades of this community is 60 years, because the young generation rejects this lifestyle.

*“They does not want, they are simply ashamed, they doesn't even want to take me to the market [...] or see me working [...] when I work, I have to lock the house door and the gate door, me and my daug-*

*hter-in-law live in the same courtyard [...], they are ashamed of me being seen working, but what can I do, I cannot go and kidnap someone and take his money, I'm sorry, I have to work to earn a living”<sup>32</sup>.*

The young people choose to work in other domains, like farming or constructions, in the country or abroad, in Hungary (in the three localities twinned with Zagon), Germany or Italy and very few of them know how to manufacture besoms (besom making proved to be the most accessible of trades and automatically the most practiced, even by some of the youngsters).

The working technique and the tools used are traditional (ax, knife, adz, clamp, sand paper for ‘facing’/ finishing, including raw materials (willow or hazel twigs; softwood: poplar, sycamore or willow for the manufacture of spoons and troughs). There is an isolate tendency to use plastic material in knitting the baskets, as it is more resistant and colored, so more attractive to the clients, while the material is more easily to obtain: “plastic strips used to fasten bricks,

CMU's, rook tiles”<sup>33</sup>.

The Lingurari therefore make besoms from birch ‘boughs’ / twigs bound with hazel strands and baskets with hazel frames and warps and wicker / willow weaving or hazel stripes, of different sizes and for different uses: small baskets with wicker weaving used for bread baking; ‘white baskets’ with handles / small baskets, used for fruit picking; big wicker baskets used for various household or farming activities (carrying wood, bringing vegetables from the basement, potato harvesting etc.). Too few still know how to carve wood spoons or troughs, at least for their own use, yet one can spot imported bamboo spoons in their homes.

The Zagon Lingurari start making their products in autumn and work all during the winter (September to February) and sell them in spring and autumn, first in the neighboring villages, for a distance usually not greater than 20 km (Boroşneu Mare - Zăbala). Most of them travel their by walking, carrying the products on their back on a stick, selling door-to-door, other times they travel by bus or by train, sometimes as far

as Braşov.<sup>34</sup>

*“No, they don't look for us (the clients), because we reach them, we go to Buzău, to Tamaşfalău [...], we have been everywhere, only to get rid of them, 'cause it's plenty of them, the villages are full, we are very many besom makers [...], these are on the first place.”<sup>35</sup>*

Because of their insecure social status (they do not own land: “this is all we have: five acres, including the house”, they have few animals: “one pig or five hens, that's all”<sup>36</sup>, and most of them live on social allowances and work as day laborers in Zagon and in the surrounding villages), there are only a few who own a horse and a carriage for a more facile distribution of their merchandise. They also attend the weekly markets in the Covasna County (Covasna) or Braşov County (Prejmer). Covasna, “where the Zagonians sell their products on the market”<sup>37</sup>, still has today a significant role in the economic circuit of the area: Sundays, the city market day, was a reference day for both sellers and buyers. During my visit in

the food-market in Covasna on Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015, I detected a product buyer, a Hungarian man, who had just bought two twig besoms from a “Zagonian”. Meanwhile, I acknowledged some ‘customer loyalty’ cases: some spoon carvers already have constant clients, who buy from him periodically (e.g. Paraschiva Oprea from Zăbala, whose son is a potato farmer, has been ordering 100 baskets and a considerable amount of besoms – 30 – every autumn, for the last 5-6 years).

The high average age of these craftsmen, as well as the new generation’s choice not to embrace this life-

style, which they label as blamable, although the products are still demanded on the market, may endanger the continuity of these traditional trades, iconic for this region, passed from father to son, generation after generation, to our days.

Speaking about the ethnic identification of the Zagon spoon carvers, there is an obvious marginal disposal of the inhabitants of “the District” with regard to the rest of the villagers, either Romanians or Hungarians.

This whole context therefore outlines, directly or indirectly, the coordinates of an ethnic portrait.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Biserica „Sfinții Arhangheli Mihail și Gavril” Zagon, *micro-monografie*, the Arcuș Cultural Center, Sf. Gheorghe, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.comunazagon.ro/index.php/ro/prezentare>; Biserica „Sfinții Arhangheli Mihail și Gavril” Zagon, *micromonografie*, the Arcuș Cultural Center, Sf. Gheorghe, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Iorgu Iordan, *Toponimia Românească*, Bucharest, Editura Academiei, 1963, p. 48, 536.

<sup>4</sup> Ioan Lăcătușu, *Structuri etnice și profesionale în județele Covasna și Harghita*, Editura Universității „Petru Maior”, Târgu-Mureș, 2008, p. 203.

<sup>5</sup> Biserica „Sfinții Arhangheli Mihail și Gavril” Zagon, *micro-monograph*, Sf. Gheorghe, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> lingurar, Lingurari, s.m. 1. Wood spoon carver (or seller), 2. Gypsy (who carves wood spoons), <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/lingurar>, accessed on February 2nd, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Ion Chelcea, *Țigani din România. Monografie etnografică*, Editura Institutului Central de Statistică București V, 1944, p. 50.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 119.

<sup>9</sup> Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Schiță asupra istoriei, obiceiurilor și limbii țiganilor. Dezrobirea țiganilor, ștergerea privilegiilor boierești, emanciparea țăranilor*, Editura SITECH, Craiova, 2006, p. 34.

<sup>10</sup> Armand Guță, *Rudarii - o enigmă balcanică*, Editura Vestala, București, 2009, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Olga Mărcuș, *Rromii carpatici în Tradiții ale romilor din spațiul românesc*, București, 2004, p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/ca%C8%99taliu>, accessed on February 1st, 2016, caștaliu, caștalii, noun, masculine (intl.) person resulted from the marriage between a Romanian and a Roma; Gheorghe Sarău, *Dicționar rrom-român*, Editura Sigma, 2006, p. 99 >kašt, -a s.m.= wood, -e; kastal/o, -e adj., s. m. I. adj. wood/of wood. II. noun m. woodworker, carpenter. 2. (pejorative) Roma person (especially rudar = băieș, in Transylvania and Hungary), speaker of Romanian, non-speaker of Romani), Gheorghe Sarău, *Dicționar rrom-român*, Editura Sigma, 2006, p. 99.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/noutati/volumul-ii-populatia-stabila-rezidenta-structura-etni->

- ca-si-confesionala/, accessed on November 9th, 2015; <http://www.comunazagon.ro>, accesat la 04.11.2015; <http://www.ispmn.gov.ro>, accessed on November 19th, 2014.
- <sup>14</sup> Ioan Lăcătușu, the quoted work, p. 139.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 259.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 261.
- <sup>17</sup> <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/noutati/volumul-ii-populatia-stabila-rezidenta-structura-etnica-si-confesionala/>, accessed on November 9th, 2015.
- <sup>18</sup> Poszony Ferenc, *Erdély népei. Szászok, örmények, székely szombatosok, cigányok*, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 235- 236 (abstract in Romanian: Etniile transilvaniei. Sași, armeni, secui sambotiști, rromi).
- <sup>19</sup> Ioan Lăcătușu, the quoted work, p. 257.
- <sup>20</sup> Informer Maria Demeter, born in 1955, Zagon; Viorica Șerban, born in 1956, Zagon.
- <sup>21</sup> Informer Nicolae Hagiu, Romanian orthodox priest, Zagon, whose mother was born in Zagon, has been herding the Romanian orthodox community, to which the Lingurari belong, for 20 years.
- <sup>22</sup> Informer Viorica Șerban, born in 1956 in Zagon.
- <sup>23</sup> Informer Nicolae Hagiu, Romanian Orthodox priest in Zagon.
- <sup>24</sup> Informer Archpriest Ioan Bercu, The Orthodox Archpriest Parish Sfântu Gheorghe, Covasna County, born in 1952.
- <sup>25</sup> The field research was performed starting April 14th, 2015 to November 12-13th, 2015.
- <sup>26</sup> *Romano Butiq. Studiu despre meșteșugurile rome*, coordinators Ciprian Necula (KCMC), Ana Ivasiuc (Agenția Împreună), Ana Chirițoiu (Agenția Împreună), 2013, p. 52.
- <sup>27</sup> Gheorghe Costache, *Ocupații tradiționale pe teritoriul României. Studiu etnografic*. Vol. IV, Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1996, p. 214-215.
- <sup>28</sup> Informer Nicolae Dumitru, born in 1953, Zagon.
- <sup>29</sup> Ion Chelcea, the quoted work, p. 124.
- <sup>30</sup> Informer Paraschiva Oprea, born in 1935, Zăbala, Covasna County.
- <sup>31</sup> Ion Chelcea, the quoted wor., p. 124.
- <sup>32</sup> Informer Viorica Șerban, born in 1956, Zagon
- <sup>33</sup> Informer Nicolae Dumitru, born in 1953, Zagon.
- <sup>34</sup> Informer Viorica Șerban, born in 1956, Zagon.
- <sup>35</sup> Informer Nicolae Dumitru, born in 1953, Zagon.
- <sup>36</sup> Informer Viorica Șerban, born in 1956, Zagon.
- <sup>37</sup> Județul Covasna, Sfintu Gheorghe, 1969, p. 269.

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THE PLACE OF THE ROMA PEOPLE  
IN A MULTIETHNIC COMMUNITY IN  
TRANSYLVANIA  
THE VILLAGE OF BRATEIU, SIBIU COUNTY

*Oana Burcea*

ABSTRACT

Transilvania este o regiune etnografică și geografică din centrul României cu o istorie bogată în exemple de comunități multietnice și multiculturale. Localitatea Brateiu din județul Sibiu este un astfel de caz care a „suferit” de-a lungul celor 800 de ani de existență documentară schimbări și schimburi la nivelul populației. În trecut, etniile majoritare din sat erau românii și sașii, astăzi rromii le-au depășit numeric.

O caracteristică deosebită a acestei localități este existența unui neam al rromilor, rromii corturari, cea mai numeroasă comunitate de acest fel din sudul Transilvaniei. Rromii de aici sunt prezentați din punct de vedere istoric, cultural, interrelațional și al așezării, oferind o imagine a „locului” acestora, atât ca poziție geografică cât și ca situare în conexiune cu ceilalți.

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Transylvania is an area very rich in examples of multiethnic and multicultural communities. During the last years, we focused our attention on such a community in southern Transylvania, located in the village of Brateiu, in Sibiu County.

The Sibiu County lays in the central part of Romania, in the South of Transylvania region, and has been an important center of economic and cultural development through the centuries. The county is divided into five ethnographic regions: Tarnava Valley (Valea Târnavelor) to the North, the Land of the Secas Rivers (Țara Secaşelor) to the West, Hartibaciu Valley (Valea Hârtibaciului) to the East, the Outskirts of Sibiu (Mărginimea Sibiului) to the South-West and the Land of the Olt River (Țara Oltului) in the South-East.

The population of the Tarnava Valley region is ethnically diverse. The main ethnic groups that live together are the Romanians, the Hungarians, the Saxons (a population with German origin), the Roma people, the Jews and the Armenians, which grew social, economic and cultural relationships through the ages. In this study we will pay attention to the Roma people, who will be analyzed in terms of their interference with other ethnic groups, and of social, economic and cultural relationships, with a case study on the Brateiu village.

Brateiu is a village in the North of the Sibiu County, on the National Road 14 that connects the towns Medias and Sighisoara, in the Tarnava Valley ethnographic region and the Tarnava Mare sub-region. The village is crossed by the Tarnava Mare river in the

North. It was first documented in 1283 and is the administrative locality of the Brateiu commune, which additionally contains Buzd village. The population of Brateiu is multiethnic, consisting of Romanians, Roma, Hungarians and Saxons, socially, economically and culturally connected through the centuries. One thing that we can be sure about is that the Romanians are the indigenous population in this place, having lived here long before the arrival of the Saxons, who were brought to Transylvania by the Hungarian kings at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in order to defend the borders of the Kingdom of Hungary. The Hungarians first entered Transylvania in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and conquered it through the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Hungarian nobles, landowners in Transylvania, colonized Hungarians and brought them as workers on their lands.

Our special consideration in this study will go to the Roma ethnic group. There are three types of Roma in Brateiu: the Tent Gypsies (Gabor or Kalderash, meaning tinkers, metalworkers), the 'Silk' Gypsies and the Vatrași (Vatrashi, former domestic slaves). The 'Silk'

Gypsies, considered to be "the original ones", have remained in very few numbers and, together with the Vatrashi, are thought to form a single Roma people. We will therefore use the term 'Silk' Gypsies herein for the other Romani groups in the village as well, except the Tent Gypsies.

In order to offer an idea as close to the reality as possible regarding the number of Roma people, we gathered some information, unofficial, from the village school and from the mayor's office. In the administrative village of the commune, the Roma people represent 60% of the population, while in Buzd they are 90% of the population. This however differs from the numbers in the official statistics. As an estimate number, there are over 700 Tent Gypsies and 800 Silk Gypsies in the administrative village of the commune. A villager from Brateiu told us that the Silk Gypsies originating from Brateiu used to have very good relationships with the Romanians and they were well educated.

The ethnic structure in the commune (the main ethnic groups), during the period 1930-2011<sup>1</sup>:

| Year | Romanian | Hungarians | Roma | German | Total |
|------|----------|------------|------|--------|-------|
| 1930 | 1193     | 27         | 247  | 1169   | 2642  |
| 1956 | 1917     | 14         | 28   | 1031   | 2992  |
| 1966 | 2050     | 49         | 41   | 1112   | 3252  |
| 1977 | 1780     | 27         | 626  | 1049   | 3482  |
| 1992 | 1446     | 17         | 1128 | 87     | 2679  |
| 2002 | 2055     | 46         | 1025 | 56     | 3182  |
| 2011 | 1758     | 36         | 1258 | 37     | 3415  |

Speaking about the great number of Roma, who is now the main population according to unofficial data, a villager made a remark that says it all about integration, living together, and acceptance: "the non-Roma people have integrated". Concerning the Tent Gypsies, there is no doubt they declare their ethnicity, they have a strong sense of self-esteem and of the caste they belong to. We cannot say the same thing about the other Roma groups, who rarely declare their ethnic membership, are in a continuous process of depersonalization and of ever lower self-esteem, and they are confused about their ethnic and cultural identity.

The above table shows how a village with a major

population formerly formed by Saxons and Romanians has now the Roma ethnic group as the dominant component in its population. This demographic growth is due to the Saxon deportation after the Second World War, the Saxon having emigrated to Germany in the 70's and the 80's, and to their exodus in the immediate period following the revolution in 1989. The communist policy of populating the villages with Roma and Romanians in the industrialization process is another factor, the village offering them a workplace and a house. The decreasing birthrate of Romanians, accompanied by the increasing birthrate of the Roma is also notable.

Brateiu, a village founded by Saxon colonizers in the 13<sup>th</sup> century is currently inhabited by a great number of Roma people. In order to understand how this thing happened, we will present the Roma from the point of view of their history, culture and settlement in the village.

The Tent Gypsies (Kalderash or Gabor) are, as the name itself indicates, former nomads, servants of the king, who were allowed to travel, had no military ob-

ligations, were not assimilated by Christianity, but had to pay taxes to the State and could practice their traditional trade skills, particularly the manufacture and repairing pots and buckets for the inhabitants of the villages they lodged in. They directly depended on the king and had the freedom of movement until late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which allowed them to preserve and strengthen their caste identity. As in a big part of southern Transylvania, Tent Gypsies traveled from village to village to practice their traditional trade, so we can talk about a movement for professional reasons, each of the two parties (the Roma and the other populations) procuring either their own livelihood or household objects<sup>2</sup>. Women's occupation was cartomancy and cowrie reading (fortune telling with cards or shells) and they work side by side with men for producing the objects necessary in villagers' households. There has always been a trade, an economic relationship between Tent Gypsies and the other ethnic groups in the village. This is a widespread phenomenon in this ethnographic area. Tent Gypsies say they used to belong to a commune, where they used

to come back frequently, especially in winters. They wandered the neighboring countryside in order to earn their living and work their trade. They always traveled and lived together, for instance three brothers with their families and their tents. They could stop at the edge of the village, usually near a forest or a river, but only with the permission of the authorities. Little by little, their mobility became slower and slower and, between the two World Wars, they were not allowed to practice their trade without a permit. The culmination came with their deportation to Transnistria between 1942 and 1944, where many Tent Gypsies found their end. In the early 60's, the authorities provided them with land for the building of houses. In Brateiu, they received land lots for building on the Şes street, a new street in the village, inhabited by young families who came from the Apuseni Mountains and settled here due to the emerging industry in Medias and the lack of jobs in their home towns and villages. After the nationalization in 1948, the population living in the Apuseni Mountains were left without the right to practice logging and mining and were forced

to migrate to industrialized areas, where the government offered them with jobs and houses.

The Tent Gypsies started buying the houses on Şes street and moved there starting in the 60's – "they offered a lot of money for the Romanians' houses, because they aimed at keeping their community united: they wanted to live all in the same area of the village, they didn't want to be scattered"<sup>3</sup>.

The above-mentioned three Tent brothers moved on the Şes street, their families extended, relatives from other villages moved next to them and here is the village with the most numerous Tent Gypsy population in Southern Transylvania. We find it necessary to mention that, of the entire Romania, the Tent Gypsies caste can be found in this area exclusively.

The Şes street is divided into two parts, one of them entirely inhabited by Tent Gypsies, with 'palaces' or 'big houses', and another one inhabited, among Romanians and people from the Apuseni Mountains, by only a few Tent Gypsy. They wished to live together in the same part of the village and not scattered. Farmers by tradition, the Romanians who lived on

Şes street moved out, chased by the noise produced by the gypsies' hammers hitting the copper sheets.

The historical facts that facilitated the Romanians' relocation to the center of the village are the migration of the Saxons in Western Europe during the years following the Second World War and their exodus after the revolution in 1989. The Romanians have nevertheless had the tendency to move to the village center, in 'the good place', 'the prestigious place'.

The relationship with other ethnic groups is characterized by collaboration: the Tent Gypsies repair and manufacture people's pots and are being paid for this in cash or in kind. The coppersmiths were highly valued by the Saxons, who appealed to them whenever they needed.

One particular element that constitutes the Tent Gypsies' identity is the superiority of their caste (the blue-bloods of the Roma). Their superiority is perceived not only by themselves, but also by the predominant population. The local people talk about the Tent Gypsies as "not gypsies, they are clean and hardworking". On the other hand, Brateiu has an ad-

vantage over other villages – it is well known mostly due to the Tent Gypsies and their copper products.

The Silk Gypsies presumably settled in the village in the interwar period, when they were working for the Saxons in farming or, in the times they were craftsmen, as shoemakers or musicians. The ‘original’ Silk Gypsies are referred to in a superlative manner, because they study at the Conservatory, work as teachers or engineers, and now they have houses in the village center, next to the Romanians. Many of them flew to Western Europe, where they live a better life. They also took advantage from the Saxons’ leaving, being offered their homes for rent, which they later succeeded to buy.

The most numerous of the Roma people, the Vatrashi, are located in the Valea Mare area. Their houses lack the grandeur of those of the Tent Gypsies and this highlights their economic status characterized by poverty. Nowadays they live on social allowances, day labor for the Romanians or even for Tent Gypsies, or from working at the factories around Brateiu. The Saxons’ departure left deep traces in the occupational

and material life of the Roma, as they found themselves without their main employer.

The villagers’ geographical positioning has distinct limits: the street once inhabited by Saxons is now populated with only a few Saxons (around 30), Romanians and well-off Roma. The street with the Orthodox and Greek-catholic churches is now inhabited by locally-born Romanians, the Brateians. The Silk Gypsies live uphill and the Tent Gypsies spread along the street that enters the village from Medias.

We will hereinafter mention some of the relationships and exchanges among the village ethnic groups:

↪ *The Neighborhood*: a special institution of mutual aid composed by the inhabitants of the same street, borrowed by the Romanians from the Saxons. Three neighborhoods still exist in the present, including a few Silk Gypsies, but no Tent Gypsy. We notice that the Silk Gypsies borrow the customs of the other ethnic groups, while the Tent Gypsies remain closed in their own group, hardly letting foreign elements to penetrate their culture.

↪ *Intermarriages*: they existed, but few: Romani-

ans-Saxons, Romanians-Silk Gypsies;

↪ The Romanians overtook from the Saxons their organization style, some recipes (the Hanklich, a traditional cake) and gardening;

↪ The Romanians learned crafts from the Saxons: wheelwrighting, tailoring;

↪ The Saxons were industrious, they grew many pigs and the relationship between them and the Tent Gypsies was of economic nature: the Tent Gypsies have never worked as employees for the Saxons, instead they manufactured buckets and copper stills and they got paid by the Saxons with money and food (meat, flour, cornmeal, oil).

↪ At present, the Saxons’ houses are being inhabited by Romanians and Roma;

↪ *The architecture* of the Romanian houses and buildings is influenced by the Saxon architecture (not only in Brateiu, but in other Saxon or even Romanian villages as well);

↪ Another example of the Romanians and the Saxons cohabitation and interchange is the *dwelling type*: “the Romanian and Saxon cohabitation over the

centuries in the land of Tarnava Mare County lead the Romanians, who traditionally were a people of shepherds and farmers, living in houses made of wood or clay, to borrow the architectural art brought by the Saxons from the West when they started building their houses of stone”<sup>4</sup>. The German architectural style is observed not only in the villages with a Saxon majority, but also in the Romanian villages. However, the Romanians did not let themselves completely “contaminated” by that style, because the Romanians’ houses are “less austere and sober [...] The Romanians gave interiority to the walls, thus grace and warmth”<sup>5</sup>. “... In the Romanian settlements emerged in the shadow of the Saxons’ houses and depending on them, the Romanians have lived and still live an acute inferiority complex towards the Saxon population: in the purely Romanian or mixed villages where the development of the two populations was parallel, a sense of dignity and pride evolved in the Romanians’ soul, who consider themselves as equal, if not superior to the Saxons in terms of intelligence, initiative and work capacity, reclaiming tacitly, but with

determination, the right to an equal appreciation and respect”<sup>6</sup>.

⇒ The custom of wandering from house to house singing Christmas carols (*colindat*) entered to the Romani heritage and is carried forward by the Roma. This phenomenon is frequently met in Romania.

⇒ “*Gogitul miresei*, the bride’s songs, is practiced today only by Tent Gypsies. This singing used to be practiced by Romanians in the past and consists of songs sung by the bride’s girl friends and close women before she leaves the parental home for the groom’s house<sup>7</sup>.

#### SPECIAL PHENOMENA IN THE TRANSYLVANIAN SAXON VILLAGES

##### **Nationalization and Settling in the Saxon Houses**

Roma’ and Romanians’ settling in the Saxons’ houses started in the early 80’s, a historic moment when the first benefited from the treaty between Romania and the former Federal Republic of Germany, according

to which the German government paid the Romanian government a tax for each emigrated Saxon. The Romanian government confiscated or bought the Saxons’ houses and subsequently rented them to other ethnic groups.

##### **Romanian and Saxon interethnic relationships**

In respect of the Romanian and Saxon interethnic relationships, the Saxon influence was stronger in terms of specialized crafts during the Middle Ages and the capitalist period on the one hand, and in the cult art on the other hand, but, terms of folk art and culture, the Romanian influence is more comprehensive due to the deeper roots and the large artistic scale of these manifestations<sup>8</sup>. The richer Romanians would buy painted pieces of furniture and painted pottery manufactured by Saxon artisans and the Saxons worked for the Romanians’ taste in return<sup>9</sup>. The Romanians supplied the Saxons with wool materials necessary in the manufacture of pieces of clothing or, sometimes, even the piece itself<sup>10</sup>.

In conclusion, the Roma are clearly delimited

geographically, culturally, socially and economically. The Tent Gypsies have a collaboration or trade relationship with the villagers, while the Silk Gypsies/the Vatrashi borrow from the Romanians’ and Saxons’ customs, they work on their properties and do not have the consciousness of an ethnic affiliation.

In the eyes of other ethnicities, the Tent Gypsies are ‘good Roma’ and the Silk Gypsies are ‘poor quality Roma’.

The village of Brateiu, characterized by a multiethnic community and by cohabitation over the centuries of at least three ethnic groups, shows aspects and phenomena met primarily in Transylvania:

- Borrowing traditional customs from the Romanians by Roma;
- Undertaking institutions from the Saxons by Romanians and Roma;
- The population of the Saxon houses by Romanians and Roma;
- The presence of the Tent Gypsies caste in Southern Transylvania only, a caste with a strong, undertaken identity;

• The economic interdependence of the Tent Gypsies, the Romanians and the Saxons (the Tent Gypsies buy fodder from Romanians and the Romanians buy copper stills from Tent Gypsies).

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The Office for National Statistics, The Sibiu County Statistics Bureau <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/>
- <sup>2</sup> Burcea, Oana, *Din istoria și tradițiile cortorariilor din sudul Transilvaniei*, in Cibinium, Editura Astra Museum, Sibiu 2012, p. 138-148.
- <sup>3</sup> Tesăr, Cătălina-Constantina, *Discursuri despre identitate în comunitatea multiethnică, studiu de caz Corturarii din Brateiu* – diploma thesis, the University of Bucharest, the School of Letters, the Ethnology and Folklore Department, Bucharest, 2004.
- <sup>4</sup> ——— *Monografia județului Târnava Mare*, p. 369-370.
- <sup>5</sup> Id.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 405.
- <sup>8</sup> Irimie, Cornel, Necula, Marcela *Influențe și împrumuturi reciproce în arta populară românească și săsească. Câteva considerații de ordin teoteric și etno-sociologic*, in Biharea (Collection of art and ethnographic studies and materials), Oradea, No. 1977, p. 137.
- <sup>9</sup> Idem.

- <sup>10</sup> Cornel Irimie, *Noi contribuții etnologice la stabilirea profilului istorico-cultural al poporului român*, in Sibiu Landmarks. Studies and essays presented during the Cibinium cultural and artistic festival, Sibiu, 1977, p. 78.

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# TRANSYLVANIAN HATTER WORKSHOPS

*Karla Roșca*

## ABSTRACT

În spațiul multinațional, multicultural și multiconfesional al Transilvaniei, costumul popular tradițional al fiecărui grup etnic a evidențiat un stil, o tradiție, un univers aparte, răspunzând unui întreg complex de factori care i-au determinat evoluția.

Norme și reguli stricte de viață reglementau în comunitatea rurală tradițională, modul de a te îmbrăca,

de a te comporta și de a acționa în diverse împrejurări și ocazii. A te îmbrăca într-o anumite perioadă istorică, într-un anumite spațiu și într-un anumit fel, devine, cu timpul, o emblemă de recunoaștere, un mijloc de identificare, un model cultural bazat pe sistemul de valori creat de etnia respectivă, de-a lungul timpului<sup>1</sup>.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the multinational, multicultural and multiconfessional Transylvanian context, the traditional folk costume of each ethnic group illustrates a style, a tradition, an individual culture, reflecting the outcome of a whole factor complex having determined its evolution.

Within the traditional rural community, life guidelines and strict rules once regulated people's way to dress, behave and act on different occasions. Dressing in a certain way in a certain historical period and in a certain place becomes, in time, a sign of recognition, a way of self-identification, a cultural model based on the value system created by that specific ethnic group in the course of time<sup>1</sup>.

## THE HAT – SYMBOL OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

“Along its history, the hat has been a social status indicator and a symbol of change as well. Worn for protection purposes in the army (military helmets were padded with felt or leather), for religious or ceremonial reasons, for safety or as a garment accessories, the hat always marked the transition to another status. The history of hat is actually the history of modernization, of economic development and economic depressions, of revolutions and, why not, of wars and peace. Hats define generations and inhibit the classification of persons on shallow grounds; they speak of the times lived by the people who wore them and what they had to say to the next generations.”<sup>2</sup>

Since ancient times, people have adorned their heads with hats, caps or helmets. Most probably, the head covering was mostly a garment decorating accessory and less a protection against bad weather, but often a sign of rank, with a strong symbolic strength. It cannot be established since when exactly people started to wear them, but monuments and stone drawings reveal that the gear *adorning* the head is as old as the clothing. Images depicting rulers with high wigs have been discovered in the royal tombs of Persepolis; opposite them stand the subjects, bare-headed (symbol of freedom)<sup>3</sup>.

During the Middle Ages, the Spanish noble was almost equal to the king and he could wear his hat even in the king's presence. Supposedly, King Arthur's nobles partied with their heads covered. According to tradition, every king wore a headgear: the crown. There is a story about the *Sun King*, Louis XIV of France, that perfectly reveals the value attributed to hat in those times: when the king of England visited his counterpart in Versailles, he was allowed – from Louis's express order – to leave his hat on at the ta-

ble, with the condition to take it off each time he and the king exchanged words. At the time being, people used to eat with their hands and cutlery was practically unknown. We can easily imagine how the king's hat looked at the end of the dinner<sup>4</sup>. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, hats were considered an accessory destined exclusively to the high-ranked members of the society<sup>5</sup> and they had different shapes: conic, square, with folds. The most common hats were for men, manufactured in Spanish style – high, made of felt (a textile of fine fiber), dark colored, with front curling brim, decorated with a buckle or a brooch banded on a ribbon and sometimes with plumes<sup>6</sup>. The hat exceeds its essential condition and slowly but surely becomes a fashionable accessory, a social indicator. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the first black felt *bicorn* and *tricorn* hats, with golden ribbons and ostrich plumes, were created. In that period, ladies' hats began their ascension, becoming one of the most controversial accessories, with spectacular evolution over the ages.

In Germany, hatmaking is related to trade associations, which communicated intensively with one

another and took numerous notes. Among these writings are *The Great Book of Hamburg Hatters* and that of the Bremen hatters. The book of a Saxon protestant clergyman, *The Trade of Hatmaking*, published in 1705, survived to our days, the same as the piece of Abbe Moel, written in Paris in 1760. These documents and writings are the first to offer detailed information on the organization of trade associations and on the manufacturing methods used by the manufacturers in those times. Two older documents are very interesting, offering information about the existence of several hatmakers associations. We are talking about two federal letters written in 1477 and in 1512, through which the manufacturers in several towns in Rhine signed a convention in order to approach the commercial habits and the federal customs and adapt to them. They provide strict rules for the apprenticeship period and for the manufacturers' rights and duties. The salary provisions include even a fee. The purpose of the commercial conventions is to limit and even eliminate competition. Karl Mayser of Ulm related interesting things about the hatters associa-

tions on the occasion of the second General Assembly of Hat Retail Shops, which took place in Elsass-Lothringen in 1911. Karl Mayser mentioned that, in the Middle Ages, the apprentice had to accomplish a difficult craftsman work, according to paragraph 2 of the old Hatters Regulations: a sharp hat, a hunter hat with a wide loop and a pair of very long felt hose. The craftsman work had to be performed in the house of a guiding craftsman, whom the apprentice had to provide for, too. In case the apprentice did not pass the test, the time and money were wasted. We learn that the craftsman exam was, at the time, an expensive issue that required a great deal of knowledge and a big amount of money<sup>7</sup>.

Noteworthy are also some specialist's entries in a book about the hatmaking trade in 1799. An otter hair hat was made in the following way: first, the most dusty and dirty hairs were removed from the otter fur, then the fur was rubbed with a mixture of hard water (nitric acid) and mercury, diluted with river water; after drying, the fur returned to its soft and workable state and was ready to be cut (tailored). The hat mak-

ing mixture had the following composition: 3 ounces otter hair, ½ ounce beaver hair, ½ ounce red fur, and 2 ounces untreated otter hair. Of this mixture, one could make 4 equal pieces of felt, which would be then joined by wetting and felting. This felt was then milled in a cauldron filled with water and yeast; finally, the hat was filled over a hat form and left to dry<sup>8</sup>.

#### WHAT IS THE SITUATION OF HATTER WORKSHOPS IN TRANSYLVANIA?

In Transylvania, hatmaking did not develop but in a few towns, more precisely in the most important commercial centers: Sibiu, Braşov, Bistriţa, Lipova, Sebeş, frequented by people from other European countries and where the products could be sold thanks to the economic relations with other towns and given the fact that the gentry or aristocracy bought such products from abroad. For these reasons, the merchandise of the local hatters was targeted to the urban middle class. In 1494, three hatters are recorded in Sibiu.

Here, in 1554, hatters were granted a privilege regarding the practice of their trade and the selling of their products. The hatmakers of Sibiu were organized in a trade association and the town council approved their statutes in 1589<sup>9</sup>.

The Transylvanian hatters attended to the needs of the population of Transylvania, but a great part of their products was exported in Wallachia as well<sup>10</sup>. The peasantry and poor townspeople were satisfied with the hats manufactured in the villages. The Transylvanian hatters kept up with the fashion. At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they produced a great variety of hats. The urban hatters manufactured civil hats, as well as military hats and caps, with wide brims for adults and with narrow brims for children. The *Pojon* hats imitated the quality hats made in the Slovak town of Pojon. Hungarian-, Turkish-, English- or French-fashioned hats were manufactured too<sup>11</sup>.

#### THE TRANSYLVANIAN HATTER WORKSHOPS IN THE 20<sup>th</sup> AND 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURIES:

**Tischler Josif (Sebeş, Alba county)**

**Virgil Ilieş (Galeş, Sibiu county)**

**Radu Ilieş-Dădârlat (Sălişte, Sibiu county)**

The number of written reports about hatmaking and hatter workshops in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries Transylvania and the absence of translations from German and Hungarian to Romanian limits the access to information in view of a thorough learning of this trade. Between 2005 and 2006 and in 2015, researchers made a detailed work based on listing, archiving, valuing and buying the hatters workshops in Galeş and Sălişte (Sibiu county) and of those in Sebeş (Alba county).

Examining these workshops was not a random choice, but primarily based on the multiethnic and multiconfessional structure of the region, starting from the belief that the ethnic or religious diversity leads to motivating perspectives for anthropological

research.

The working methodology was primarily based on specific on-site investigation methods and on participatory observation, like accounts, interviews, as well as content analysis of the information obtained from different types of documents (order ledgers, family documents, inspection ledgers, invoices issued by the raw material factories) etc. In order to offer an as exhaustive presentation of the hatter workshops as possible, the following issues were approached: Who taught this trade before and since when has it been practiced? What are the used materials? Where do they acquire the materials? What tools are used? What techniques are used? How do they find their clients (fairs, markets, orders, contracts)? Where do they sell their products? Do they have successors to carry the practice of this trade on? Is this trade still profitable?

In 2005, a research was carried out in the workshop of the last Saxon hatter in Transylvania, Josif Tischler, with the purpose of identifying and buying this workshop that has operated since 1902.

Josif Tischler was born on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1907 in Sebeș, in an old hatmaking tradition family and died in 2003, at the age of 96. The workshop operated until his death. The craftsman learned the trade from his father and was granted the trade license on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1942, in Alba Iulia.

In his workshop, Josif Tischler manufactured hats for the folk costume, women's and men's urban hats, top hats and straw hats for Saxons, Hungarians, Romanians and Roma people. In winters, he made hats for women, because these were painstaking and more difficult to make and in spring, about Easter, he made hats for Saxon, Romanian and Hungarian fold costumes (including hats for men). He had a license to sell, at first in Sebeș, then at the animal fairs in Hațeg and Lugoj.

The raw material was felt cloche of different colors and sizes, which he bought from the cloche and hat factories *M Korber & Co. S.A., Periam, Fabrica de pălării S.P.A.* Timișoara, *E.K. Thomas* of Timișoara, *Fabrica de pălării Frații Ladstätter* of Timișoara, *ASTRA-Fabrica de cloșuri* of Sebeș-Alba, *Union of*

Jimbolia, *Hans Keul, magazin de manufactură și mărunțișuri* of Sibiu, *2 Piața Mică or Furnitura-articole speciale pentru industria de pălării*, and he procured the chemical products and the pigments from *Timaniil, Matei Szegedi* and *Aurel Hoborka* factories in Timișoara. The raw material for the straw hats (the knitted straws) was bought from Cisnădioara, Sibiu county, from the villages in Covasna county or from Petrești (Alba county). The finest straw knitting was always the one bought in Cisnădioara and the finest rice fiber knitting was the one brought from Japan by a Sibiu hatmaker, Krauss. The machines and tools used in the workshop were bought from *Fabrica A. Trink factory* of Jimbolia<sup>12</sup>.

Josif Tischler sometimes made cloches, too (but this required a fulling installation) and for this he needed to observe the entire technology flow. The hatter's son, Winfried Tischler, reveals some hatmaking secrets: The first step is dying. The hat is pulled over the form block and is tightened around with a string, in order to stay fixed. 20 such pieces are put in the cauldron filled with dye. The hats are dyed with

acid black: a bit of acid is taken with a spoon and dissolved in cold water (if dissolved in warm water, the acid splashes and is very dangerous). After it has dissolved, the acid is poured into the dye, is boiled thoroughly and mixed well, in order to result in a uniform dying. When the water loses color, the hats are ready. The hats are taken out, they are let to drain, the thread is pulled out and a white stripe results on the hat. The hat interior remains white. If someone wants to buy a traditional hat, he will look inside the hat to see if it's white; if not, it means the hat has been dropped on the ground and he won't buy it anymore, supposing it has been remade. Dying lasts for about 8-9 hours. The dyed hat is reinforced on the sides with flour and gelatin. It is put on a table with a hole in the middle, it is pressed and firmed by the hand in the interior. After being reinforced, the hat is passed through the pressing machine. The reinforcement needs to be strong, so that, when pushed against, the hat will not break. It is left to dry again, then pulled over a form block according to the desired size. The hats are brought in the workshop and put on the steam pot, one on top

of the other. Each hat is then put in the big press with metal forms of different sizes.

*“The hydraulic press used to work with water with an operating pressure of 6 atmospheres and was used for ironing. Formerly, a petrol stove was used, and then a gas stove. The hat is put on the form block again and, using a wooden form, the edge of the hat is cut down with a knife at the desired distance, especially on a belt form block.*

*It is brushed again with the brushing and polishing electric machine. The hat is polished with a felt cloth on the polishing electric machine.*

*Later, the reinforcing belts are sewed with the sewing machine and the ribbon inside the hat with the belt machine, by fixing the small wheel that sews the brim in the interior too. This operation was done with a special, very old sewing machine.*

*The lining was formerly sewed manually, now it is glued. The corduroy was not attached, but sewed inside-out, on the brim (green and red for the Hungarians, black for Romanians, with ‘tassels’ for Saxons and Romanians, depending on where the*

*client was from and what he desired).*

*The hats are then dried outside and stored in the client room, in cupboards and showcases. Before being sold, they are checked out once again. The time of the process is 2 to 5 days. The total number of hats made in one week: 100 pieces.”<sup>13</sup>*

The folk costume hats differ from one ethnic group to another by brims. If the hat had wide brims, it means it is for Saxons, if it has narrow brims, it is for Romanians. The wide brim hat, manufactured in the Saxon workshops, was initially worn all over the Outskirts of Sibiu (Mărginimea Sibiului), while the peasants' cloche hat (clop in Romanian), worn by each shepherd today, was introduced more recently, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, replacing the wide brim hat.

Virgil Ilieș, the well-known hatter in Galeș, alluded in an interview to the peasants' cloche hat-making detailed technique<sup>14</sup>:

*“The cloche hat is a cloche hat from the beginning. It is made from wool or cloche. The cloche is the felt (carded, felted, fullled wool) pulled over the*

*form block, tied with a string, kept in dye – on the form block – for two hours (in peasants' cloche hats case, the dye enters only on one side, while the hat stays white on the inside; if it's not white, the peasants won't buy it, they will say it's made of an old one), dried, polished, starched, dried again, pressed again, polished again, then the oilcloth is put on, it is cut, hemmed, then the women finish the work by hand: the lining, the ribbon, the bows. I polish it a little more and the cloche hat is ready to be taken at the market. Its creation takes around 10 days and it is taken about 60 times in the hand. Multiply it by hundreds, maybe thousands of cloche hats and you will understand that who wears the hat takes with him a piece of my soul, imbued in the material... Shepherds wear them with great pride, like a symbol of noble distinction... the cloche hat prevents the disappearance of the Romanian folk costume. In recent times, people modernized their lifestyle and their cloths, so the folk costume is obsolescent. It is very sad that three great values – the language, the folk costume and the traditions – are dying. It*

*means that we are dying as nation... Around here, in our places, only the hat is still authentic of the entire folk costume. It's worn by shepherds in Jina, Poiana, Tilișca, by drivers in Vaideeni, Novaci, Polovraci, by gentlemen and also by gypsies (the latter, once servants for the Saxons, borrowed the habit of wearing hats, which they adapted to their style...).”*

Why was this trade maintained here, in Săliște?

*“The Craftsmen Union was founded in 1892 in Săliște, with the purpose of teaching trades to Romanians' children and helping them go on in life. Trade unions had legal personality, but they also played the role of workers' union, meant to defend its members' rights. There were great numbers of craftsmen here in the past: shoemakers, tanners, belt makers, carpenters, furriers... There were three tanneries in Săliște, where soles and leather were produced, and the shoemakers manufactured shoes, slippers or opinci (traditional peasants' shoes), which were then taken on the other side of the mountains, in Wallachia. It was still 1892*

*when a two-year apprentice school was founded in Săliște. The children were offered special education, received journeyman certificates, then qualification certificates and finally craftsman licenses. The intellectually endowed young people, but with limited material resources, were helped to finish their studies by the existing trade unions and by the church, or to continue studying in other countries... until 1945, when Albina Bank (Banca Albina) went bankrupt and our trade union lost its entire capital; it was re-established in 1992.”*

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of craftsmen who owned trade workshops in Săliște increased very much comparing to the period when the Union was founded. The statistical data collected from the school yearbooks regarding the number of apprentices enrolled in the Industrial Vocational School of Săliște are convincing: in the school year 1900-1901 3 hatmakers<sup>15</sup> were enrolled here, we identify 4 hatmakers<sup>16</sup> who, in 1927, produced on demand or for the market and whose products were sold in

many Transylvanian towns. There is only one hatter still working in Săliște: Radu Ilieș-Dădârlat, Virgil Ilieș's son.

In Radu Ilieș-Dădârlat's hatter workshop in Săliște, it seems like you turn back in time, in the workshops of the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, among craftsmen and journeymen who have been making hats from generation to generation. Radu confesses to us:

*"hatmaking has many steps, but being satisfied with the outcome of your work is the most important thing when making hats. Otherwise you cannot sell it. We make all kinds of hats, from folk hats to the cowboy hats or women's hats. When I started this job, I began with the Romanian hat, because the trend is to abandon the Romanian folk costume and there are no more than 12-13 hatters in the whole country. My father used to make hats exclusively for the Romanian folk costume, but I work for all ethnic groups: Saxons, Hungarian, Roma."*

Many hats in the making pass in his hands every day; and not just once, but many times, because there is a long way to go from cloche to a hat: it starts

with the press, goes through steam and warmth baths and ends in the sewing machine... Today, Radu does not manufacture the cloche anymore; he buys it ready made from the Czech Republic. The cloche is made from fine sheep wool, but it can also be made from hare fur (this one is more expensive).

*"We dye the cloche for the folk hats on form blocks, but they have to keep their interior white, otherwise you won't sell them. People check them. I make all sorts of hats, but I started with the one for peasants. Look at this one: the folk hat underwent several modifications: initially it was lower, people wore wider brimmed hats in Săliște and it had a ribbon with white in it. Later, the hat rose from 12 cm to 13 cm and then 14... size 3, which means it is 53 cm tall. The diameter varies by 2 mm from one size to another, while the oilcloth we apply on the reverse side for strength by one cm. There are heaps of hats in the workshop, some are almost ready, some are waiting for the journey through the sewing machines."*

Before being ready to be sold, each hat is taken in

hand around 60 times, like Sisyphus at work, a very tedious work and in extremely high temperatures, a work that only this man, the last of the Mohicans of this trade, knows.

Nowadays, Săliște is a town, but nothing happens in this town. Radu and a few other local craftsmen struggle with the dropping demand and with specific problems – in this case, the risk of being left without the raw material: the felt cloche, a smooth cocoon that gives birth to two twin hats and that he can find only in one place now, in case he doesn't want to use a Chinese one, of melan wool.

Radu inherited this trade craft by an interesting twist of fate, from his grandmother's husband, Ionel Dădârlat, who raised his father and whose name is now added on the business sign, so it would not disappear. Radu's father was, in fact, a 40-year old veterinarian technician and he died when, for Radu's sake and in order to keep the tradition, the family reprised making hats. They had a great advantage: the workshop, equipped with machine tools and form blocks, some of them a century old. Radu's grandmother

worked together with her husband and a thing that she could not remember was that, one day, Radu was sent to steal from the factory in Timișoara.

*"The manager let me watch for two months. I used to help the workers. This is when I learned about form blocks, about decorating the hat, about stitching. I learned what my parents did not know, because they only made traditional hats – remembers Radu. The traditional hat is starched with the brush, then it is rolled and kneaded. The bone clay, with dextrin and corn starch, is used hot, in order to be absorbed by the cloth, but not too much, because if the cloth gets stained, it is ruined."*

Back then, Ceaușescu only tolerated the artistic handicrafts, so that the family got a license just for fold hats.

Radu removes the felt from the steam pot with bare hands. *"I want to feel the burning. I cannot do it with gloves, 'cause I cannot feel it, I can only do it with bare hands"* he says with pride. In order to give shape to the hat, he lets the hot cloche on the wood form block for a few seconds, squeezed with a roller. He spreads

the cap well on the form block, ties it with a stripe, then pulls the brims firmly. Dried on a plank, the new hat is brushed and, placed on a duralumin matrix, it gets into the press, a 130-year old Viennese hydraulic machine. Later, the hat is left to dry on wooden boards and is brushed again. *“It has to be brushed during each work stage. You starch – you polish; you give shape – you polish”* says Radu, standing next to the hat-rolling machine that he has built himself, while he handles several brushes and a piece of felt. After the pressing stage, the brims are cut manually, with a cutter and a hand-made spacer, while the hat rests on a *stemp* – a shorter form block. *“My grandfather and my father used to cut the brim with knives made out of saw blades sharpened in a special way.”* The sewing stage is followed by the brim ironing, a complex operation involving another type of form blocks, called *razli* and is performed using a sack of hot sand. The following stage the manual operations – lining and adorning.

His wife helps him with the hand sewing, although Radu is good at it too. The two spouses have only one

assistant and sometimes their son, who is very willing to participate. Besides the work, they have to face the challenge of resisting on the market, dealing with the management, selling and even accounting. All by themselves.

Meanwhile, Radu Ilieș-Dădârlat rolls a Gypsy hat in his hands and ostentatiously tears its lining: *“You see? Gypsy hats and shepherds’ hats are dyed on the form block, only on the outside. The Gypsy won’t buy it if it’s not white on the inside, he’ll say it is not new and it’s probably an old hat, turned inside-out and resold. The shepherd will want quality product too, strong, waterproof, thick.”* But from felt to celebration head-dress worn by gentlemen or shepherds, the hatter intervenes many times, with meticulousness or effort, using techniques that only he knows anymore.

#### HATTERS WORKSHOPS. THE FUTURE IN THE MUSEUM

What is the future of hatter workshops? Can they carry on the tradition?

In this globalizing world, the only chance for us to keep our cultural identity is to recover the traditional values, to preserve the tradition and to value each identity symbol. All these are possible without the museum.

In this respect, the project *Open heritage. Increased Public Accessibility to Multi-ethnic Heritage Values in ASTRA Museum*, financed through the SEE 2009-2014 Grants (Island, Lichtenstein and Norway), within the PA16/RO12 program “The Conservation and Revitalization of the Cultural and Natural Heritage”, is meant to reconstruct Josif Tischler’s hatter workshop within the *Trade Workshops* basic exhibition organized in the Multicultural Museum Pavilion.

The hatter workshop was purchased by the ASTRA Museum in 2014 and it is unique in Romania; it is a symbol of the Transylvanian multicultural identity, due to the ethnic variety of this region. The hatter workshop will try to recompose the atmosphere of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the workshop was in full development, focusing on the technology flow, on the hatmaking stages (from the raw material to

the end product), as well as on the marketing stage. The interview taken to Winfried Tischler in 2005 informs us that Josif Tischler’s grandparents made hats in Săliște, too, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Dădârlat family. The enlivening of the exhibition space can be realized by video projections, video and audio interviews, photographs taken in hatter workshops in Galeș, Săliște and Sebeș, documents and notes on the hatmaking activity.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Maria Bătcă, *Găteala capului-marcă identitară a românilor bănăţeni din Voivodina*, in “Caietele ASER”, Editura Muzeului Țării Crișurilor, Oradea, no. 4/2008, p.107.
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.stelian-tanase.ro/mica-istorie-despre-se-cretele-palariei/> (accessed on February 3rd, 2016).
- <sup>3</sup> Louis Jacobi, *Fabrikation von Damen-und Herren- Filzhüten*, Berlin, 1933, pp.19-20.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p.21.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibidem, pp 149-163.
- <sup>6</sup> <http://www.stelian-tanase.ro/mica-istorie-despre-se-cretele-palariei/> (accessed on February 3rd, 2016).
- <sup>7</sup> Jacobi, Louis, pp.22-23.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p.25.
- <sup>9</sup> Sibiu State Archives, Z.U., I, no. 140.
- <sup>10</sup> Ștefan Pascu, *Meșteșugurile din Transilvania până în secolul al XVI-lea*, Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, București, 1954, p. 219.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 218.
- <sup>12</sup> A. Trink, *Catalog special. Toate calapoadele, sculele și mașinele pentru industrie de pălării*, Tipografie J. Schmidt, Jimbo-

lia, 1920; A. Trink, *Catalog ilustrat despre forme, unelte și mașini*, Jimbolia, 1920.

- <sup>13</sup> The interview was taken in 2005, in Josif Tischler's hatter workshop in Sebeș, 24 Ianuarie street, Sebeș, Alba county. We point to the fact that the craftsman has never been interviewed during his entire career. After his death, his son, Winfried Tischler, requested a team of museum curators from the ASTRA Museum to come to Sebeș in order to inventory the workshop and, if possible, buy it for exhibition purposes.
- <sup>14</sup> In 2006, within the *Forgotten Traditions – A Unvalued Heritage* project financed by the National Cultural Fund Administration, the ASTRA Museum researchers team carried out an on-site research in Galeș, to Virgil Ilieș's hatter workshop.
- <sup>15</sup> Coordinator Victor V.Grecu, *Săliștea Sibiului străveche vatră românească*, Asociațiunea Transilvană pentru Literatura Română și Cultura Poporului Român ASTRA, Sibiu, 1990, p. 151.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p.154.

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- Bortfelt, Carl, *Die Hutmacherkunst*, Bremen, 1902.
- Coord. Victor V.Grecu, *Săliștea Sibiului - străveche vatră românească*, Asociațiunea Transilvană pentru Literatura Română și Cultura Poporului Român ASTRA, Sibiu, 1990.
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- <http://languagehat.com/the-social-meanings-of-hats/> (accessed on February 8th, 2016)
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# CARAȘOVA. THE DESTINY OF A MULTIETHNIC SETTLEMENT IN THE MOUNTAINOUS BANAT

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## ABSTRACT

Studiul este rezultatul unor etape de cercetare multidisciplinară derulată în anul 2015, în satele crașovene (croate) ce compun comuna Carașova: Carașova (Karaševo), Lupac (Lupak), Iabalcea (Jabalce)\*.

Obiectivele cercetării de teren au urmărit surprinderea unor realități socio-culturale complexe, determinante pentru înțelegerea evoluției acestei comunități. Astfel, studiul urmărește parcursul și formele de manifestare a relațiilor interetnice în ultimele decenii, prin prisma mărturiilor personale, a experiențelor de viață relatate atât de membri ai comunităților, cât și de reprezentanții culturali și politici (profesori, ziariști, președintele și comitetul executiv al Uniunii Croaților

din România).

Extrem de importantă este și surprinderea modului în care croații din Carașova au optat pentru integrare pe piața muncii din Europa de Vest (după încheierea războiului din fosta Iugoslavie), în contextul disoluției și transformărilor industriei comuniste din Reșița și Anina, formând ulterior o comunitate de muncă în Croația și Austria, beneficiind covârșitor de deschiderea pe care a oferit-o dobândirea cetățeniei croate. Studiul fixează aspectele specifice revenirii localnicilor în locurile originare, la cel puțin un deceniu de muncă în Croația, conturându-se un imaginar al emigrației.

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#### HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONFINEMENT. SOURCES USED AND WORK METHOD. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES. RESULTS.

The research carried out in the Carașova commune by the ASTRA National Museum Complex curators in the context of the “Open Heritage. An Increasing Public Accessibility to the Multiethnic Values of the ASTRA Museum Heritage” project has been deployed during the period September 23 to September 25, 2015.

The extensive research performed by the ASTRA Museum team in the Mountainous Banat (the Carașova commune, located in the Caraș Gorge) in September 2015 is part of a larger anthropological,

historical and ethnological investigation that define the national minorities who left their mark on the history of the above mentioned anthropological and ethnological area. The researching approach is a rather new one, as no punctual research campaign has previously been carried out at the level of discovering the Caraș villages in the Anina Mountains by the ASTRA Museum specialists (or, before 1989, by those of the Sibiu Museum of Folk Techniques).

Nevertheless, there has been, between the 60's and the 80's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a systematic interest for the research of the pre-industrial technical heritage of the Danube Gorge (Clisura Dunării) Area (including the Timiș-Cerna corridor, with the Danube Gorge multi-ethnic villages interference area), but with a clear prevalence for revealing the heritage of the folk in-

dustries in the Almaj region (Țara Almăjului) ethnographic area. Within this historiographical frame, we point out to the studies identified as site reports and excerpts kept in the Scientific Archives collections of the ASTRA Museum, results of the campaigns run by Herbert Hoffmann, Raymonde Wiener, Corneliu Bucur, Elena Roman or Constantin Popa both in the Almaj villages and in the Gorge, at Gornea Sichevița, Plavișevița. Today, the Plavișevița village is covered by waters, as a result of the Iron Gate I Hydropower reservoir construction works. A significant part of the technical assets – the horizontal water mills (the well bucket mills) and their components, subsequently covered by the Danube River – are kept in the collections of the National Village Museum, thanks to the ethnographic campaigns for the mill installation salvage. Campaigns for the investigation of the local technical heritage have also been pursued in Svinița, a village in the Danube Gorge with a Serbian ethnic majority<sup>1</sup>.

During the interwar period, historiographers paid special attention to the historical formative evolution

of the mountainous Banat population, which raised the interest of historians, ethnologists and geographers. Emil Petrovici paid particular attention to identifying the Caraș local patois, Traian Simu and Silviu Dragomir tried to identify the origins of this Balkan population in the light of the colonization waves that have influenced the Mountainous Banat region.

From this point of view, the challenge in identifying the primary or secondary information connected to the historical and anthropological data on Carașova was stressed by the scarcity of the sources characterizing the ethnic, social and cultural specificity of the investigated area. The two monograph volumes on Carașova, the research accomplished by Traian Simu and the linguistic synthesis achieved by Emil Petrovici are the starting points of the investigations. The economic history studies, as well as the anthropology studies based on some researches by Mircea Tăban<sup>2</sup>, back in the 90's, by Maria Mândroane and Dumitru Țeicu<sup>3</sup> have undoubtedly been very useful, the contribution of the latter being essential in clar-

ifying the specific imprint of the existing (or sometimes remnant) folk industries in the Caraș villages.

#### THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED INVESTIGATION

From the general features of the specialized literature to case studies on the ethnic and anthropological complexity of a multi-ethnic community, such as the Carașova community, we proposed the following directions to follow, by segments of analysis:

☞ to outline the story of Carașova (its history seen through the local community's eyes, by defining and emphasizing, through exhibitions, life-revealing experiences), as well as various testimonies of the Carașova people talking about themselves, about other people's perception about them and about aspects of coexistence and mixed marriages;

☞ to capture the expression of the complex relationships between the Croatian majority and the Romanian, Hungarian, Serbian, German and Roma ethnic groups;

☞ to illustrate the social and economic relationship that comprises Carașova – the industrial and mining urban centers in the Anina-Reșița region; to capture the specificity of the 1950-1990 period and the transformations that took place in this relationship after 1990;

☞ to express the relationship between the Carașova community and the State of Croatia – the 1990-2015 period, with its fluctuating evolution and, particularly, the locals' orientation towards other West European States, in their effort to find prosperity (mostly the economic migrational orientation towards Austria);

☞ to detail the relationship between the Carașova people returned to the community (after a 10 year experience abroad, at least) and those who work on the Austrian and German labor markets (the way the latter relate to their own community, their future intentions, their attachment to the original community);

☞ to capture the stages crossed by the Carașova community during the last decade, such as: the slow depopulation and the aging of the community, the

migration practice, the accelerated disappearance of the community life identity, the disappearance of trade crafts, the economic roles transformation, the decreasing number of students educated in the Croatian language, and how the Krashovani youngsters relate to the emigration issue;

to present the ways of manifesting and affirming/preserving the ethnic identity: efforts to revive traditions (the involvement of the Croatian Union of Romania in the reviving/preservation/capitalization of the material and non-material heritage by organizing local collections, studying the folklore, taking parts to festivals and drawing the public attention to the Krashovani traditional costumes);

to outline the contemporary image of the Roma community by relating the Krashovani people to them; within this context, the overtime economic role of the Roma people is detached: the practice of trade crafts that are included in the needs and dynamics of the community, the Roma settlement, their cultural recognition, the contemporary relationships between the majority and the minority (a clarifying example

is confirmed by the existence today of a mixed folk music band in Carașova, consisting of 3 Krashovani members and 2 Roma members, while they perform in the Krashovani patois, adjusting very easily to the local folklore repertory); this band carries on the tradition of music, to which the Gypsies identified with – they are the music players who will not miss a family event or a community celebration.

#### **Carașova – Geographic Position. Climatic and Geographic Specificity**

Carașova is located in Caraș-Severin county, 15 km away from Reșița, on the DN 58 national road (which leads to Anina). Lying in a mountain area, at the entrance to Caraș Gorge, Carașova benefits from a natural picturesque scenery and is the starting point to one of the most important tourist tracks in the Semenice-Cheile Carașului National Park. Geographically, the Carașova commune falls within the Banat Mountains and is located in the Carașova Basin, bordered by the Semenice Mountains at the East, edged by the extension of the Anina Mountains

at the South, by the Donecei Mountains at the West and by the Ezeriș Basin at the North, with which it forms the Caraș-Ezeriș Basin Corridor<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Brief History. Ethnological and Demographic Data.**

The Carașova commune has 3260 inhabitants and an average population density of 23 people/km<sup>2</sup>, with a higher density in the composing villages (100-200 people/km<sup>2</sup>). With the shape of a closed basin, located at an altitude of 1200m, East of Semenice, with an aperture towards North-West and South-West, crossed by the Caraș River, Carașova, with its 6 villages (Clocotici, Lupac, Vodnic, Rafnic, Nermet, Iabalcea), forms an “ethnic island” with specific features<sup>5</sup>.

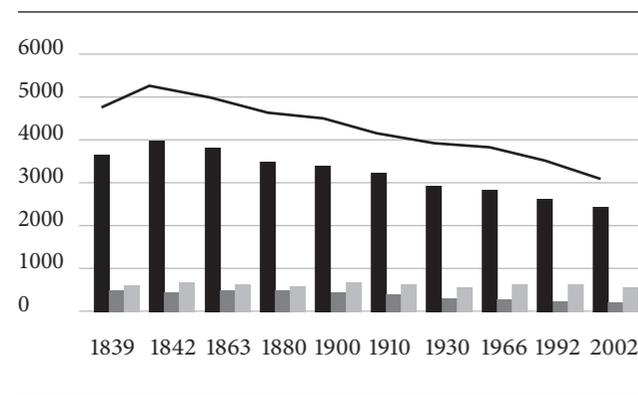
Statistical information:

According to the 2002 Census, the ethnic makeup of the commune was: 3260 – total population, of which: 2758 Croats, 162 Krashovani, 146 Roma, 144 Romanians, 16 Germans, 16 Serbian, 12 Hungarian<sup>6</sup>.

The demographic situation during the 18<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> centuries:

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Carașova</i> | <i>Iabalcea</i> | <i>Nermed</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1770        |                 |                 | 400 case      |              |
| 1839        | 3602            | 495             | 643           | 4740         |
| 1842        | 3986            | 410             | 757           | 5153         |
| 1863        | 3793            | 500             | 697           | 4990         |
| 1870        | 3532            | -               | 704           | -            |
| 1880        | 3486            | 501             | 666           | 4653         |
| 1900        | 3353            | 422             | 745           | 4520         |
| 1910        | 3195            | 396             | 673           | 4264         |
| 1930        | 2940            | 339             | 642           | 3921         |
| 1966        | 2853            | 327             | 667           | 3857         |
| 1992        | 2639            | 277             | 644           | 3550         |
| 2002        | 2437            | 227             | 596           | 3260         |

Source: enciclopediaromaniei.ro/wiki/carasova

*Demographic evolution*

Source: [enciclopediaromaniei.ro/wiki/carasova](http://enciclopediaromaniei.ro/wiki/carasova)

The main population is Croatian (Krashovani), followed by Roma (4,5%) and Romanian (4,4%). Almost 93% of the Carașova inhabitants are Roman-Catholic<sup>7</sup>.

Some writers believe the origin of the Carașova people is an ethnic enigma. The people of Carașova (or *Krashovani*, how they call themselves) are a distinct population, whose language, costumes and customs are different from those of the Bulgarians, Ser-

bian or Croats. Apparently, they have their roots in the Slavic population, who migrated from South in the 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries and established in seven settlements, in the limy plateau that stretches between the Reșița Basin and the Caraș Valley<sup>8</sup>. The Carașova borough was first documented in 1230 and, among its first sovereign, we mention count Nicolae de Voila, vested with full rights by Andrew the 2<sup>nd</sup>, king of Hungary.

In 1520, the fortress was presumably conquered by the Turks and then deserted. Through the ages, the Krashovani identified with this rocky and arid land, though astoundingly beautiful. In 1690-1700, Marsigli mentions, in his notes, the commune Karaseva in the Vârșeț county<sup>9</sup>.

The measures taken by the Austrian authorities in intensifying the colonizing process in Banat and organizing the urban space following rigorous urbanism rules, mostly put into practice during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, marked the Carașova community. The aftermaths of the 1787-1791 Turkish-Austrian war contributed to these changes, as

many villages have been devastated, the houses burnt and the population slaughtered or driven away. In order to rebuild the settlements, the Austrians imposed strict rules, both concerning the disposal of the street network and the modality of parceling, fixing the due land for each household and imposing the rule according to which building was only possible complying to a street line shape<sup>10</sup>.

In 1839, there were 3602 people living in the commune, of which 3568 Catholics and 34 Orthodox. In 1930, the population counts 2940, of which 2587 Krashovani, 153 Germans, 83 Gypsies, 74 Romanians, 43 other ethnicities<sup>11</sup>. As of the 1992 Census, there were 4085 self-declared Croats living in Romania and 2775 Krashovani, who are (like the Csango in Moldova) a distinct ethnic group, existing here only. But as for 2002, the situation changed radically: only 207 Krashovani lived here anymore, while the number Croats living in Romania increased to 6786.

The increasing affinity towards Croatia had geopolitical explanations. Croatia had gained its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 and turned its face

to the West. Since its economic state was better than that of Romania, many Krashovani started working in Croatia, even several times a year, being awarded the Croatian citizenship<sup>12</sup>. Owners of Croatian passports, they were the first Romanian citizens to be integrated in the European Community, needing no Schengen visa to travel to the West. Nevertheless, for a long time they were content to just work in Croatia and they returned every time to their families.

However, during the last years, the Krashovani started leaving for work, like other Romanians, in more distant countries, especially Austria and Germany. In my discussions with the young informers from Carașova, I noticed that the perception of the high school graduates about the near future includes (at least) one working experience in Western Europe<sup>13</sup>.

From the perspective of the above mentioned facts, the testimonies that I have gathered related to Croatia almost uniformly highlight the major role played economically by the Croatian 'adoption' in the 90's, taking into account that the first important currency

amounts (German marks) were earned by the young people left to Croatia, contributing to the economic survival of their families. According to local sources, during the 1991-1995 period, around 50% of the population under 45 years went to work to Serbia, then Croatia. The Krashovani are proud for the fact that their strive on the construction sites of Zagreb or other Croatian towns meant, in fact, the participation to the reconstruction of Croatia after the war in former Yugoslavia<sup>14</sup>.

Taking into account their religious identity and the relationships established over time, some Krashovani began feeling like they were Croats and they declared themselves Croats at the Romanian censuses before 1989. Still, in that period, most of them continue to declare their belonging to the Krashovani ethnicity, which in their opinion differed both from Serbians and from Croats<sup>15</sup>.

#### CARAȘOVA IN THE COMMUNISM POST-COMMUNISM SEGMENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES

Before the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as in the cases of all Banat villages, the Krashovani did not leave their home village, except for an emergency or an act of God (force, poverty, disease, conscription etc.) and any trade or occupation other than those practiced in the village were out of the question.

With the development of mining and industrial centers and, above all, the instauration of the communist regime, the urban occupation started to have a visible influence upon the local people, who commute to towns or settle there in order to live a better life. But the Krashovani people tell us about the positive aspects of life in communism too: besides earning a salary, they considered that learning the Romanian language made their integration on the Romanian labor market easier, both before and after 1990:

*“For us, the Krashovani, speaking the Romanian*

*language was a useful thing and we are proud of this, because we too have and had workers, doctors, professors among us, who learned and studied in the Romanian language, which made it easier for them, because they could find a job everywhere.”<sup>16</sup>*

The data we gathered also highlight the gratitude and ease with which the Krashovani relate to the Romanians in the communities on the Caraș Valley with predominantly Romanian population:

*“We’ve had and still have Romanian friends here and we help each other; it has always been like this with the farm work, for instance. We are not extremist; we have not been pressed by others. We’ve been like their kin.”<sup>17</sup>*

The research has touched the somehow sensitive subject of mixed marriages, which functioned like a meter for measuring inter-ethnic relationships and demographic ratios in the area.

During the communist period, the Krashovani men and women became more open to other ethnics

and, after 1990, the Krashovani families opened even more to marriages to Romanians, who were the main ethnic group in the urban centers Reșița and Anina and in the ethnic configuration of the neighboring villages as well:

*“The percentage of marriages between Romanians and Krashovani did not exceed 5-10% before the 90’s and increased to over 10% after the Revolution. Those who come here embrace the Catholic religion and, in ten or twenty years, you can’t tell that they are not from here and have not been Catholic. They learn and speak our dialect, but we cannot tell the difference.”<sup>18</sup>*

It is well understood that ethnic assimilation is determined by the linguistic one.

The religion (and the Krashovani patois) play here a decisive binding role in terms of the Krashovani’s solid identity as a kin. The interwar theses elaborated by Traian Simu<sup>19</sup> and Emil Petrovici, according to which the religious and linguistic factors are essential to the survival and secular assertion of this ethnic group that lives in the austere lands of Anina Moun-

tains are (re)confirmed<sup>20</sup>.

The accounts of the persons we have questioned during the conducted interview are important with respect to Carașova's destiny related to the communist era. These accounts show through a certain degree of nostalgia after the economic safety offered by the jobs in the mining or iron and steel industries. These are remarkable things, even if, with the work in the industry, the disappearance of the local solidarity generated the evanescence of the traditional world.

The economic decline of the Krashovani villages occurs after 1990, in the context of the lapse of jobs in the specialized plants of the socialist industry. In particular, we refer to the what the lose of jobs with the CSR (the Reșița Iron and Steel Enterprise) meant, for the Krashovani, among others, and to the social effect created by the systematic restructuring of the Anina mining plants<sup>21</sup>. The economic stability of the Krashovani families was harshly affected by the increasing lack of jobs in the first post-communist decade, starting with 1991-1993, more precisely with the granting of the Croat citizenship to most of the

Carașova inhabitants (this is why the 2002 Census measures 84.60% (2,758) Croats of the population).

**ASPECTS OF THE DISSOLUTION  
AND RECONSTRUCTION OF  
KRASHOVANI IDENTITY.  
RELATIONS WITH CROATIA  
AND THE WESTERN WORLD AND  
THE IMAGE OF THE NATIVE  
VILLAGE.**

Today, even if the members of the Krashovani community accumulated many years length of service in Austrian and German companies, their relation with the the native place and with the members of the family left home is strong. The well-off material life of the Krashovani families (who have worked in the West). This fact left its mark even on the local architecture, either by the alteration of the initial structure of the houses or by the disappearance of the old house itself and the construction of a new one with modern building materials. As a result, during the last dec-

ades the traditional building resources and, of course, the archaic urban planning techniques, were abandoned<sup>22</sup>.

The demographic phenomenon describing the behavior of those who left to work in the European Western countries is constant in terms of returning home after variable work periods and with material accruals. We notice the fact that the religious holidays such as the prayers, the household baptism, the Holy Easter and Christmas are the most consistent opportunity for the temporary separated family members. The Krashovani weddings are another occasion for the families to reunite in private, as well as in the sacred space of the village church<sup>23</sup>.

In terms of resuming the community resettlement efforts, we notice that, after decades of tough experience of working abroad, the Catholic Church, by the endeavors of the parish priest Petru Rebegilă, reunites the returned Krashovani, engaging directly in the tradition preservation process and joining them around the Church. The presence of the locals at the Sunday mass solemnized in the local language (and

in Romanian on the occasion of mixed weddings) is overwhelming. The administrative and spiritual fulfillment achieved by the Carașova Parish during the last years by the implication of the people who are departed for work but, returned for vacations, take active part to solving the community needs, is obvious<sup>24</sup>.

The percentage of mixed marriages and the number of micro-communities founded in Croatia are insignificant. The narrations accumulated during this research highlight the aspects compounding the image of the Krashovani who left massively for Serbia, then Croatia, after 1990, not with the purpose of setting in there for good, but in order to work in much more developed industries than those of Romania. We must not forget Romania's social and economic context soon after the debut of the privatization process, which was characterized by the dissolution of the great industrial centers and the explosive unemployment. The granting of the Croat citizenship, as well as the intervention of the State of Croatia in order to facilitate the granting of the double citizenship to the

Krashovani ethnics (who declared themselves Croats after 1990 in massive numbers) became an important chance, an economic salvation we can say, for the pauperizing Krashovani villages:

*“beside us – the students who left in 1990 with scholarships – many Krashovani left to work in constructions in Zagreb and the surrounding areas. Many did not abandon their origins and came back. We have been accepted there, they treated us like their kin, still we were not from the place, we were those who had come from Romania.”*<sup>25</sup>

On their turn, the Roma people also lived the above realities. Croatia granted the citizenship without making a difference: when many Krashovani families left, numbers of the Roma community members left to work abroad too. The Roma came back (they still do) or bought their own house lands. They built new houses, which led to the previously unseen situation where poorer Romanians worked for Roma people. We can even talk about an economic role reversal at this level of social relationships. Nevertheless, the col-

lective memory retains some nostalgia for the former Roma people, remembered by others as the household assistants (honest people), good blacksmiths or brick craftsmen.

## CONCLUSIONS

The history of Carașova is, to a great extent, the history of mountainous Banat, but it is also representative for what multiethnicity and multiculturalism represent in this part of Romania. The Krashovani case is distinctive, significant for what the strength of this group means. One of the major provocations for the locals facing the estrangement from the native place was to keep their identity values. The older and more deserted Carașova villages became after 1990, the stronger the social pressure to keep the identity value was.

Our research captures the cultural, social and economic changes. The prosperity can be seen in the family life standard, in the transformation of the local architecture, in the outcome of the State of Croatia's

implication in this minority's affirmation<sup>26</sup>. One distinct conclusion of this study concerns the role and involvement of the Croatian Union of Romania in the affirmation of the social, educational and cultural goals of the Banat Krashovani. The revival of the local folk band, the beginnings of a cultural valuing process of the spiritual and material ancestral inheritance, the sustained implication of the Catholic Church in the community consolidation, these are all stages in the process affirmed during the last decade.

The dynamic poles of foreign economy have changed along the last 15 years, the Krashovani preferring to work in Austria and Germany, where they hope to find social stability and a permanent revenue after returning home. The personal "sacrifice" of the departed family members is compensated by the economic security the families experience and display. The working experience in the Western world dominates the discussions about the future of young high school graduates. In the same time, the information gathered during the conducted interview indicates a lack of formation and affirmation perspective for the

Krashovani teenagers, so that the only benchmark for many of them remains the help and the social and professional models offered by their parents, who left to work for variable time periods.

In our opinion, the depopulation of Carașova and the simultaneous aging process resulted in a loss of traditional culture values. These are only kept sporadically (symbolically), on the occasion of private celebrations (celebrations of the house spiritual protectors) or on the occasion of rustic holidays or Fârșang (celebration of the masked people, which precedes the Easter holiday). The economic importance of field shelters almost disappeared because shepherding, as archaic occupation, diminished progressively (the drastic drop of the number of sheep, the abandonment of sheepfolds etc. are obvious in our times). The same thing happened to the traditional trades in constructions: limestone burning, carpentry and coopery disappeared.

The greatest challenge in the near future is expected to be the (re)unification of the young generation with the *ethos* of their own ethnic group, as well as the

identification of economic and cultural solutions for motivating the young generation to regenerate and

assert the spiritual capabilities that define the Krashovani minority.

## Notes

\* Crașovenii sau carașovenii sunt una dintre cele mai interesante naționalități ale Banatului, cu o mare vechime în locurile în care trăiesc, cu o apartenență etnică încă nedefinită de specialiști. Ce se știe sigur este că vorbesc o limbă de origine slavă, au îmbrățișat religia romano-catolică și trăiesc, în principal, în șapte sate așezate între vechile centre industriale Reșița și Anina: Carașova (Karaševo), Lupac (Lupak), Iabalcea (Jabalce), Clocotici (Klokočić), Rafnic (Ravnik), Nermet (Nirmic) și Vodnic (Vodnik).

<sup>1</sup> Hoffmann, Raymonde Wiener, *Raport de cercetare a meșteșugurilor și industriilor țărănești din sud-estul Banatului*, in the Scientific Archive of the ASTRA Museum (hereinafter referred to as S.A.), Stock B I Cercetare românească, box 5, 1962, 10 sheets; Raymonde Wiener – *Fișe din teren: Cercetarea industriei alimentare în Banat și alte instalații de industrie populară 1961-1962 (manuscript, 72 pages)* in

the ASTRA Museum S.A., Stock B I Cercetare românească, box 5; Cornel Irimie, Herbert Hoffmann, *Morile cu ciutură din Banatul sud-estic – subbazinele Cerna, Nera și Timișul superior*, 1960-1961 (typescript), in the ASTRA Museum S.A., Stock B I Cercetare românească, box 5; Corneliu Bucur, "Aspecte social-economice al practicării morăritului în partea de Sud-Est a Banatului" în *Cibinium* 1967-1968, Sibiu, 1968, pp. 195-211; Gheorghe Bodor, *Raport de cercetare a industriilor țărănești în scop alimentar (teascuri) în Carpații Meridionali, Oltenia Subcarpatică și Banat, colectiv condus de C. Irimie*, 1962 (typescript) in the ASTRA Museum S.A., Stock B I Cercetare românească, box 5; Corneliu Bucur, *Aspecte social-etnografice ale industriei țărănești a morăritului din partea de sud-est a Banatului anii 1967-1968* (typescript), Stock B I Cercetare românească, box 5; Constantin Popa, *Fișe de teren privind ocupațiile din localități din Caraș-Severin (manuscris)* 1971, Stock B I Cercetare românească, box 16.

<sup>2</sup> Mircea Tăban, "Arhitectură și ocupații tradiționale în areal periurban (municipiul Reșița)", *Analele Banatului, New Series*, Ethnography 3, 1997; Mircea Taban, "Arhitectură și ocupații tradiționale în areal periurban–II–comuna Carașova", in *Memoria satului bănățean. Studii și cercetări de etnografie*, vol. II (Timișoara, 2001), p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Țeicu, Dumitru, *Banatul montan în Evul Mediu*, Ed. Bantica, Timișoara, 1998; Idem, *Studii istorice*, Ed. Mirton, Timișoara, 2003; Idem, *Moara de apă din Banat*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2012, p. 260-300.

<sup>4</sup> In the Caraș Valley, most colonists in the villages where the colonization occurred in the first stage have been assimilated by the local population, many of them settling in economic and mining centers like Oravița, Anina, Reșița. The geographer Ion Conea mentions, beside the scattered, mountain-type village, the scattered one in the valleys, the aggregated one in the lowlands, and the mixed-type villages, with a compact core along the road, but dispersed and scattered on hillsides and in valleys.

<sup>5</sup> Mândroane, Maria, *Carașovenii. Dublul locuibil, în Minoritățile între identitate și integrare*, Arad, 1999, p. 82, 83.

<sup>6</sup> The statistic data have been confirmed by M. Radan, the President of the Croatian Union of Romania, Carașova.

<sup>7</sup> Almost unanimously, the local people considered themselves simply *Krashovani* before 1990 and their mother tongue was called the *Krashovani* language, which made it almost impossible for anybody to make a Krashovani believe that he or she is Serbian, Croat or Bulgarian, as they considered themselves a special people, with a peculiar language. Linguists think that the Krashovani patois is closer to the dialects in South-East Serbia and Western Bulgaria, according to Prof. Mihail Radan, deputy of the Croatian Union of Romania in the Romanian Parliament, in an interview on September 26, 2015. An interesting work of great value historically is, no doubt, Castiliei Manea-Grgin's doctoral thesis, called *Dezvoltarea socială a croaților carașoveni din România în secolele al XVII-lea și al XVI-lea (The Krashovani Croats' Social evolution during the 17th and 18th centuries)*, presented in Zagreb in 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Trăpcea, Th., N., "Despre unele cetăți din Banat", in *Studii de istorie a Banatului*, Timișoara University Timișoara, 1969, p. 60-62.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 89-96.

<sup>10</sup> Traian Simu, *Originea carașovenilor. Studiu istoric și etnografic*, Tipografia Corvin, Lugoj, 1939, p. 56-69, passim.

<sup>11</sup> Iohann Iacob Ehrler, *Banatul de la origini până acum (1774)*, Editura Facla, Timișoara, 1982, p. 34-39; see also Maria Mândroane, *Tipologia așezărilor rurale din județul Caraș-Severin*, volume I, Editura Brumar, Timișoara, 2012, p. 78.

<sup>12</sup> According to Marta Hațegan – kindergarten teacher, 40 years; Hațegan Petru – worker, 46 years, interview taken on September 29th, 2015 in Carașova.

<sup>13</sup> According to Iacob Mihai Domăneanț, librarian, interview taken on September 29th, 2015 in Carașova.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>15</sup> According to Nicolae Ursul, 63 years, worker; Zlatko Ursul, 32 years, engineer, interviews taken between the 25th and the 27th of September, 2015, Carașova.

<sup>16</sup> According to Marian Mihailă, manager of the Carașova Community Center, interview taken on September 26th, 2015. *A handful of trade is a handful of gold* – a concept of the Soviet propaganda after the Second World War starts to make sense during the post-war years, when communism was settling here and when the troubled waters of the

newly installed system dropped small farming at the edge of the society. The young villagers embrace the existing trades and become State employees, commuters (especially for the Romanian Railways and the Anina and Reșița Factories), oscillating daily between town life (Oravița, Anina) and village life, where they found themselves within their families.

<sup>17</sup> According to Mihai Radan, teacher, former deputy, former mayor, the President of the Croatian Union of Romania, interview taken on September 25th, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> According to Marian Mihailă, manager of the Carașova Community Center, interview taken on September 26th, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Traian Simu, *Originea carașovenilor. Studiu istoric și etnografic*, Tipografia Corvin, Lugoj, 1939, passim; see also Victor Tufescu, “O mărunță populație balcanică în Banat: Crașovenii”, in *Balcania*, IV, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1941, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> “In church and in school, this is where Krashovani found out they were old Croats”, see Emil Petrovici, *Graiul Carașovenilor. Studiu de dialectologie slavă meridională*, Impri-meria națională, București, 1935, p. 43. Idem, *Studii de dialectologie și toponimie*, edited by I. Pătruț, B. Kelemen,

I. Mării, Editura Academiei, București, 1970, p. 56-60.

<sup>21</sup> Petre Lugojan – music player, accordionist, 48 years, interview taken on September 30th, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Mihail Deleanu Marcu, *Însemnări despre carașoveni*, Editura Banatica, Reșița, 1999, p.123.

<sup>23</sup> Iacob Mihai Domăneanț – librarian in Carașova, 42 years, graduate of the School of Letters, major Croat Grammar and Literature, Zagreb, interview taken on September 29th, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> According to Rebegilă Petru, parish priest, 45 years, interview taken on September 27th, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> According to Daniel Lucacelo, teacher, member of the Croatian Union of Romania, interview taken on September 26th, 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Pursuant to the on-site data, the authors of the study consider that the Croats’ institutional and spiritual relations function as a model on how a foreign country (Croatia) commits to efficiently valorize the human resources (social and cultural) belonging to a minority outside its borders, Romania in this case. Moreover, the way the Croat Diaspora assumes the ‘modernization’ of the Banat Krashovani is remarkable.

The Croatian Union of Romania, the ‘Hrvatska Grancica’ newspaper archive (PDF), 2007-2015, 30 numbers studied;

## Sources

List of the informers interviewed during the on-site research, the Carașova commune, September 24th-30th, 2015;

- Marian Mihailă, manager of the Carașova Community Center, 58 years, technician;
- Ecaterina Rebegilă – farmer, spirit copper still owner, 73 years;
- Elena Sârbu – executive secretary of the Croatian Union of Romania
- Mihai Radan – teacher, former deputy, President of the Croatian Union of Romania, 78 years;
- Liubimir Radan – teacher, 39 years;
- Marius Călina – 78 years, miller, farmer;
- Maria Călina – 46 years, housewife;
- Elena Călina – 24 years, clerk;
- Ivan Dobra – journalist, 45 years, college graduate, University of Zagreb;
- Petru Zoran Giurgulena – technician, 39 years;

- Lina Tincul – editor, 37 years;
- Daniel Lucacela – teacher (radio editor for programs in Croatian on Radio Reșița), 38 years;
- Nicolae Ursul – worker, 63 years;
- Zlatko Ursul – engineer, 32 years;
- Alina Ursul – economist, 29 years;
- Petru Cârsta – farmer, 56 years;
- Marta Hațegan – kindergarten teacher, 40 years;
- Petru Hațegan – worker, 46 years;
- Aniska Hațegan – daughter, 23 years;
- Petru Rebegilă – Catholic priest of the Carașova community, 47 years;
- Ion Drăgan (Broncaș) – music player, violin II, Roma;
- Gheorghe Lugojan (Pițurici) – music player, violin I, farmer;
- Petre Lugojan – music player, accordionist;
- Jacob Mihai Domăneanț – librarian, 42 years, graduate of the School of Letters, major Croat Grammar and Literature, Zagreb.

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REBUILDING CONTEXT FOR SÁMI  
COLLECTIONS IN “FRANZ BINDER” MUSEUM  
OF WORLD ETHNOGRAPHY

*Adriana Avram*

ABSTRACT

Prezentul articol își propune să prezinte pe scurt rezultatele cooperării bilaterale dintre Muzeul de Etnografie Universală Franz Binder (C.N.M. ASTRA) și Muzeele Sverresborg și Roros (MiST) în cadrul pachetului de lucru dedicat documentării istoriei culturale a minorităților etnice din cadrul proiectului Patrimoniu Deschis. Principalele rezultate, cu mare capacitate de a genera efecte multiplicative, sunt: (re)

contextualizarea colecțiilor de patrimoniu Sámi ale muzeului sibian prin accesul la resurse locale din țările de origine, dezvoltarea unui model teoretic de re-contextualizare a colecțiilor exotice care ar putea servi oricărui muzeu care abordează culturi îndepărtate, și, desigur, beneficiile activității de networking instituțional.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ethnology as science relies on specificity and difference between groups and on classifications by comparison. Yet, the same group can be differently classified depending on the observer and his/her system of cultural reference. Museums, as observers, make no exception. In addition to that, there is no such thing as a minority unless you have a majority, and a relation between the two. When it comes to cultural heritage, museums play a major role in depicting that relation. No matter which is the definition of ‘ethnic minority’ agreed at political or social level by national or international bodies, it finally gets down to being *culturally outnumbered with a consequence*.

Museums of ethnography worldwide share a com-

mon mission of documenting and representing the Other (minority or majority) in terms of an “interpretation of culture”<sup>1</sup>. This was at the core of the logical framework of *Open Heritage* project, implemented by ASTRA Museum from Romania and MiST Museums from Norway between January 2014 – April 2016<sup>2</sup>.

To sum up, this paper presents the objectives and results of the before-mentioned bilateral cooperation as follows:

- re-gaining context information for the Romanian Museum on its Sámi items (historical but also contemporary). To observe the involvement of the Nordic museums in documenting Sámi people as presented to the wide public.
- to propose a draft of a ready-to-use method so that museums that face the challenge to curate exotic

collections/context can use in peer co-operation with other museums from the countries of origin

- networking and cooperation (creating and consolidating a resource database to be consulted when developing a Sámi related section in “Franz Binder” Museum.)

While ASTRA generally focused on Roma issues and MiST on recent migrations, documenting Sámi people heritage from “Franz Binder” Museum collection offered a side sample of how bilateral work can generally help put collections back into their context. The focus has not been set on Sámi heritage as a purpose in itself, a research ‘of the objects’ – even if thorough documented in the process - but on the way bilateral relations helped extract and theorise from direct museum practice a method for two museums from two different cultural areas to share knowledge on cultural groups and create information ‘around the objects’, to be used to curate experiences for the final beneficiaries: their visitors.

#### SHARED INTEREST: ENRICHED CONTEXT AWARENESS ON EXOTIC HERITAGE

In order to become more relevant and provide better heritage literacy, museums must intensify their interpretative efforts on heritage - either that it has entered the collections 150 years ago, which is the case of Sámi objects now in “Franz Binder” Museum, either on collections of meaning made ‘on the go’, as exotic migrant culture is claiming for its place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Norwegian museum.

Networking is a way of adding value to collections documentation. When going into partnership for this project, ASTRA and MiST had for common objective sharing knowledge through bilateral relations, in order to both improve their approach to cultural minorities presentation in their institutions. Institutions that are going through changes and pay extra focus to being more relevant, in the process. This has been a bottom-up process, where project partners shared knowledge and worked in practice in order to

extract and draft a generic approach / toolbox, and where stakeholders are considered to be the medium to reach relevant key stakeholders (locals, representatives of local communities, craftsmen / living human treasures etc.).

The 3-steps method, merely a toolbox, could enrich both contemporary and historical perspective not only on some exotic cultural goods, no matter their age, whose description may enrich considerably, but also to the initial context and attached narrative details that the museums involved document for their collections, if any. The cooperation should always go both ways when the toolbox is in use between collection hosting museum – museum in the community of origin.

In order to prove its worthiness as multiplicative effects, this approach, as drafted, should in the future apply similarly in case either of the present partners wishes to contact communities from countries outside of Europe, where important collections of “Franz Binder” Museum originate or migrant groups in Norway originate. In order to work in practice, the stakes

of the two or more organisations who apply this toolbox together should be high enough to account for the input of resources in the process.

The networking process to create that toolbox was conducted through to and from study visits, a seminar and the drafting of the approach ready to be tested in practice of how Sámi collections of “Franz Binder” Museum could regain and valorize context around objects (that otherwise are too unfamiliar to local visitors and even to curators). Due to large distance and high level of necessary resources, the benefits would not equal the costs of direct field documentation / research. This is the case for the majority of our collections, since they are mostly of distant origin.

According to the ICOM code of ethics, museums not only could but should do their best to connect collections to their countries / communities of origins, and to document them and their context appropriately (as in Articles 2. 20 Documentation of Collections, 4. 2 Interpretation of Exhibitions, 6.1 Co-operation). In the nowadays background of recent migration, maybe this should also be extended as good practice to

collecting... context.

## ON SÁMI IN NORWAY

The Sámi people now live in four countries: in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Kola Peninsula in Russia. There are about 100 000 Sámi people in these countries. About 40 000 of them can speak the Sámi language. The word ‘Sámi’ is derived from the word ‘Sápmi’ which means the geographical area populated traditionally by the Sámi. The Sámi people form a nationality that does not have a nation or nation borders but a common language, culture, and history.

*The Sámi Act* was drafted after the 1917 meeting in Trondheim, city which is now preparing for the 100 years jubilee. Even if social and political emancipation took further decades, Norway hosts today the siege of the Sámi Parliament, the representative body for people of Sámi heritage in Norway.<sup>3</sup>

## FRANZ BINDER MUSEUM AND ITS SÁMI COLLECTION

Started back in 1993 as a Extraeuropean Museum of Ethnography, “Franz Binder” is the only museum of its kind in Romania. It includes old and new heritage goods that entered its collections mostly by donation from Romanian travelers that have fetched them from visits around the globe during professional or leisure contexts.<sup>4</sup>

Upon its general reorganisation, the museum shall shed light on the relationship collection – collector, on the structural connection between the two (a structuring structure), in an attempt to answer questions such as *why?* and *to whose benefit?* objects from around the world arrived in Sibiu and where donated to the Transylvanian Society for Natural Sciences, later forming and entering the core inventory of the Museum.

Thus, the “Franz Binder” is repositioning itself from ethnography-centered to world cultures interpretation. The focus for the main exhibition must

shift from displaying objects as material culture of (un)common patterns around the world, to the phenomena that led to the constitution of the collections, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century to our days. Thus, the shift of perspective will be from objects themselves to the explorers who have been engaged in the process of collecting – by which means, to what extent and for what purpose.

As a sample of what could be done in respect to re-contextualising or regaining context awareness for its collections, the Sámi based collection donated by Arthur Soterius von Sachsenheim<sup>5</sup> from Sibiu/Hermannstadt (1852-1913) was also in focus for the Open Heritage project activity of development of bilateral relations.

Sachsenheim, as ship physician, was part of Captain Wilhelm Bade’s crew who was the first to regularly accompany cruise tourists to the Arctic Svalbard archipelago (Spitzbergen) and so spent some time in the Northern area.<sup>6</sup> He brought home to Sibiu/Hermannstadt a collection of both artificialia and naturalia that were later donated to the Transylvanian So-

ciety for Natural Studies in his hometown, almost in the same period when the Norwegian scientist and amateur photographer Sophus Tromholt documented Sámi population in the Arctic Region of Norway.<sup>7</sup>

The Arctic has been attracting tourist from all over the world since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Quick development of steamships and early ages ice - breakers, railroads as well and an increase of personal wealth and more leisure time, enabled interest in the northern hemisphere. However people who traveled up North were mostly explorers, adventurers and mountaineers, attracted to exotic wildlife, remote nature and its resources or the ones who intended to conquer inhabited Arctic territories. “The opening of tourism in northern Norway in the 1870’s coincided with the emergence of Tromsø as a port for Arctic research expeditions, as well as with the founding of modern whaling stations along the North Norwegian coast, tourist attractions themselves.”<sup>8</sup>

Indirectly involvement in Arctic travelling was a great opportunity for A. von Sachsenheim to both observe and collect objects of day-to-day use of Sámi

people that he brought back to Sibiu as part of a world-wide collection. After many institutional reorganisations, now the items are part of our museum's collections of world ethnography. We have around 28 artefacts related to day-to-day living of Sámi population around Trømsø that were meant to reflect to the people back home both the exotism and the familiarity of material culture of the sole indigenous population in Europe.

Some objects from the *Sámi collection* are noted to come from Trøndheim, Trømsø, Spitzbergen or even Russian Arctic coast. We call it Sámi, but some items may as well be of pure Norwegian or other ethnic origin, or may obviously originate from different places. Clarification can only be made based on proper (re) sources and expert advice. Our collection is directly related and reflects a connection to a natural environment and natural history substantially different than our main public's over here. We also seek to document materials, techniques (duodji?) or intangible heritage related to our items, so that the museum experience we offer would become more relevant to our

visitors. Another point of interest consists of the explorers practice at that time (Hunting routes or Arctic tourism, the first Arctic Year etc.) that served as background / pretext for cultural contacts and exchanges.

The collection includes mostly household small objects such as spoons, toys, purses, matches box, sewing kit, smoking pipes, a seal skin (truly exotic for Romanians in a time of no zoo's available) but also pieces of traditional folk costume of the north Sámi (hat, belt, boots) and other easy-to-ship objects. Most of them are beautifully decorated with reindeer motifs and traditional colors – red, blue, green, yellow.

What is really interesting about this collection is that it can easily make us suspicious of the objects being extracted from their daily, mundane environment – the household – by an agile collector negotiating with the locals for objects that conceal functionality with aesthetics, and more makes us think that maybe the early arctic tourism was already in place as an engine that fueled artisan craftsmanship. Maybe traditionally hand made pieces had been already produced to be sold to foreigners and the process proved its po-

tential as a sustainable support to livelihood, like it does today in many parts of the world. Yet, it remains just a hypothesis to be proved right or wrong in the future or to be presented as such.

#### MIST BACKGROUND COVERING SÁMI

For these specific objectives, MiST was the partner that helped build the 3-steps approach as described below and played the role of the resources hub providing materials, know how and recommending further connections to other organisations from Norway that could help build the puzzling image of the context of our collection.

Sverresborg, Trøndelag Folk Museum<sup>9</sup>, has been working with South Sámi culture, and has in its open-air museum a Sámi Department of typical Sámi buildings as turf huts and small-sized houses called *njælla*, built on pillars. It has been a pioneer in presenting Sámi culture in the 1935, even if it could be questionable the ethics of the way the warden Sigurd

Tiller invited a Sámi family to live in the museum in an attempt to turn them into living museum exhibits, a trend common throughout Western Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century. “He argued for his choice by saying that the sámis are a just as important part of the culture of central Norway as the history of the majority”.<sup>10</sup>

Røros Museum part of MiST is the museum of the mining town which is now a World Heritage Site. It is also involved more deeply with studying and representing Sámi heritage and culture, mainly by the initiative of Lars Danielsen, as stated in 1956: “He hoped that within a few years a department of Sámi history would be realised at the Røros Museum. A lot of objects from the district were brought to other Museums in the country, he said. The Sámi people are therefore grateful that the Røros Museum has given room for a separate exhibition on Sámi culture. But it is too bad that the Museum previously did not have a Sámi collection which represent the cultural heritage of the Sámi people in south.”<sup>11</sup>

## AFTER THE WHY – THE HOW-TO

The common denominator for the networking activity was that minority research and learning to be organized as a dialogue with “stakeholders”.

Thus, the 1<sup>st</sup> step in the approach is that the museums support each other to (re)contextualize their items (desk study). In our case, from the point of view of their arriving in Sibiu, they tell the story of Dr. Arthur S. von Sachsenheim and the opening of the routes to the North. The contemporary link between tourism and sustainable livelihoods of indigenous people comes today as obvious, but back then artisanat (serial production and commerce of crafts products) was merely a concept yet to be born and valorising one’s tradition towards visiting strangers was probably just an emerging by-side effect. Collecting patterns are another issue interesting to document (the collector’s focus).

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> step the partners should engage stakeholders. This would consist of establishing contacts with museums or other institutions that are re-

sponsible for the Sámi cultural heritage and get expert opinions & advice. We should present our collection and its history, ask details about similarities and significant items from their collections.

Stakeholders are museums or other organisations that include in their mission the protection and promotion of Sámi cultural heritage or related material (both material and intangible).

3<sup>rd</sup> step – engaging key-stakeholders. This would consist of targeting and engaging Sámi communities representatives through the ad-hoc networking created under step 2. This a long shot perspective and would require a collection whose size and relevance for the museum should make worthwhile the effort to bring additional context to the benefit of its audience. Nevertheless, relevant and fruitful partnerships may as well be born by taking this chance.

Key stakeholders are considered the communities from which the objects originate. The objective of the interviews/requests for information and networking under step 2 & 3 would be to gather data that could be relevantly used in public displays of our collections,

simultaneously covering:

- firstly, to try to get first-hand access to documentation sources unavailable from here (bibliography, online resources, informers if available – hopefully in English).

- secondly, to get context around similar collections – belonging to the museums/other organisations in question (Sámi communities and lifestyle; general informations about *duodji* - techniques, motifs and materials; other explorers of the late 1800’s etc.).

- thirdly, to enlarge / regain context around our collections: is it more like Northern or Southern Sámi? Coastal or reindeer? Is it Sámi at all? What were the living conditions around Trømsø around late 1800s, and what was the attitude towards strangers coming to trade or explore resources / environment etc? how is it changed today?

**Proposed (open) structure of the (short) interview:**

- Please send to us describing materials over your collections / links / other sources. Are there any printed / online resources you would recommend for our

research/documentation of our collection

- could you briefly describe your collections – history of the movable, immovable or intangible Sámi heritage in your museum/library?

- based on the info on our collections, could you help us identify / confirm their enclosed descriptions (which is all we’ve got).

- are there any persons / connections you would recommend who may help us research/document our collection

- please briefly describe your experience with involving Sámi communities in your work. Could you facilitate or network us with Sámi representatives interested in promoting their heritage in this part of Europe?

- could you provide details on the destiny of indigenous heritage in Northern Europe – recent return of Sámi cultural heritage, changes in museum approaches etc.

## OPEN RESULTS

In conclusion, the bilateral interaction and exchange of knowledge and ideas resulted in the way we propose in practice a 3-steps re-contextualization method that relies on stakeholder engagement and participatory approach. In the method described above, replacing Sámi with other ethnic / cultural origin could help scoping for a project that aims at gaining / raising context awareness and generate content & interpretation for exotic collections.

Museum's mission and vision can sometimes remain beautifully expressed at a conceptual level but

not very thorough implemented in reality. The 'how' is the key to have the good intentions pave the way to museum success, which calls for a toolbox. The toolbox must be results oriented – the purpose of each ethnic minority heritage valorisation act is to trigger, ultimately, increased (self)knowledge, tolerance and therefore social good. Since meaning is depending on context, we should all try to uncover and re-present the background of our items or concerns together with additional information about them that may be otherwise severely distorted or inaccessible to us. Cooperation between peer institutions has now become more critical than ever.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Geertz, Clifford – *Interpretarea culturilor: eseuri*. Descrierea densă: către o teorie interpretativă a culturii. p.14. Editura Tact, Cluj-Napoca 2014

<sup>2</sup> www.patrimoniudeschis.ro, <http://blog.patrimoniudeschis.ro/?p=53>

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi\\_Parliament\\_of\\_Norway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi_Parliament_of_Norway)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.binder.muzeulastra.ro/colectii.html>

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House\\_of\\_Soterius\\_von\\_Sachsenheim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Soterius_von_Sachsenheim), <http://www.soteriusvonsachsenheim.com/#/dr-med-arthur-svs/4574012862>

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Soterius von Sachsenheim as part of Wilhelm Bade expeditions - [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm\\_Bade](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Bade), <http://archive.org/stream/verhandlungenun-461896sieb#page/70/mode/2up>

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophus\\_Tromholt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophus_Tromholt). Collection at the University Library of Bergen. [http://www.kulturradet.no/museumsutvikling/vis-artikkel/-/asset\\_publisher/O5qy/content/aktuelt-norsk-fotosamling-tatt-opp-i-verdens-dokumentarv](http://www.kulturradet.no/museumsutvikling/vis-artikkel/-/asset_publisher/O5qy/content/aktuelt-norsk-fotosamling-tatt-opp-i-verdens-dokumentarv)

<sup>8</sup> Abstract Barthelmess, Klaus- *The Commencement of Regu-*

*lar Arctic Cruise Ship Tourism: Wilhelm Bade and the "Nordische Hochseefischerei Gesellschaft" of 1892/1893. In Tourism in Marine Environments, Volume 4, Numbers 2-3, 2007, pp. 113-120(8) available at <http://www.ingenta-connect.com/content/cog/tme/2007/00000004/f0020002/art00005?crawler=true>.*

<sup>9</sup> [www.sverresborg.no](http://www.sverresborg.no), [www.mist.museum.no](http://www.mist.museum.no)

<sup>10</sup> Seminar on documentation and representation of minorities in museum as of April 29th, 2015, at Sverresborg Museum. Participants from MiST, ASTRA, University of NTNU. Presentation by Daniel Johansen: *Working with Sámi history at Sverresborg*. Participants from MiST, ASTRA, University of NTNU.

<sup>11</sup> Idem. Presentation by Jenny Fjellheim/Tone Rygg from MiST-Rørosmuseet: *Working with Sámi history at Rørosmuseet*, <http://www.roosmuseet.no/>

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# PHOTOS

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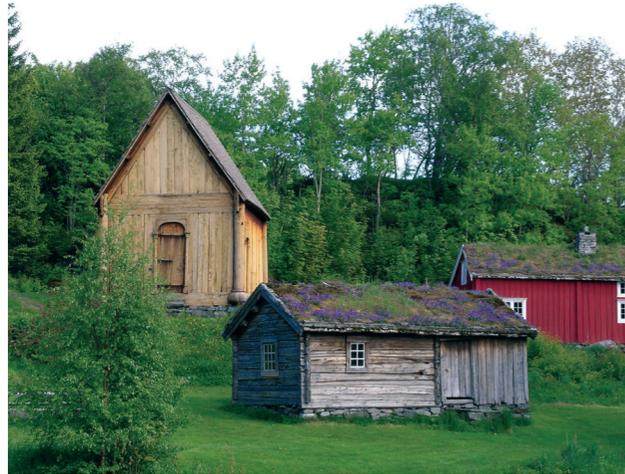
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1, 2



1, 2

3



1 — From the exhibition “The kitchen revolution” at Sverresborg, Trøndelag Folk Museum

2 — From the permanent exhibition “Fragments of Lives” at Sverresborg Trøndelag Folk Museum.

3 — Can an old folk museum museum be relevant for people who are “not interested in the past..”?



3, 4

5, 6



7, 8



1, 2 — These two pictures show two different immigrant shops. They have almost the same selection of goods. With the use of photography, we have documented how they look like in 2014, and also how they differ from each other, and how and if they differ from other Norwegian food stores. (1 – Gottschal & Siversten, 2 – Dino Makridis)

3 — The interview situation. This interview was located in the storage room of the shop. The owner's children would come here after school and do their homework and help in the shop. To the right there is a little kitchen. (Dino Makridis)

4 — A shop in Trondheim. (Dino Makridis)

5 — A part of the assortment of goods in one of the shops in the city of Trondheim. (Dino Makridis)

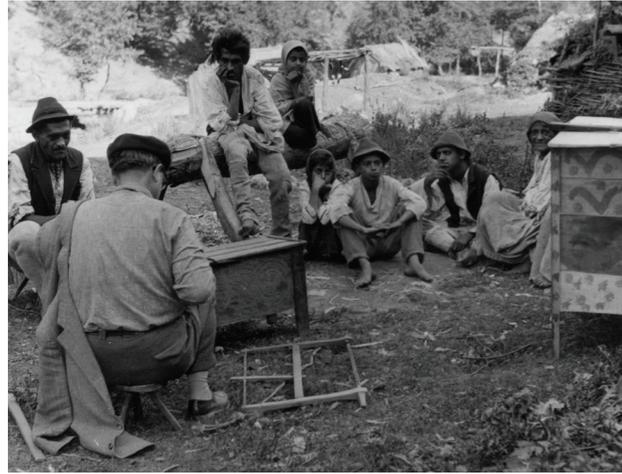
6 — A normal everyday situation in one of the documented shops. Tahir-Market, Trondheim. (Dino Makridis)

7, 8 — The shop on the left picture is located right outside the city of Trondheim, and has a rich assortment of fruit and vegetables. The picture on the right shows the assortment of vegetables in a little shop in the region of Trøndelag. (7 – Dino Makridis, 8 – Gottschal & Siversten)

9 — New types of food also mean other ways of preparing the food. Here we see a variety of kitchen equipment used in the Asiatic kitchen. (Gottschal & Siversten)



9



1 — Researcher and the *rudari* community. Cornel Irimie, the founder of the Museum of Folk Technology (ASTRA Museum archive)

2 — Maria, the basket weaver, and the Open Heritage group of researchers (ASTRA & MiST). Photo credits: Silviu Popa

3 — Weaving baskets in front of the house (ASTRA Museum archive)



1 — The church from Clejani built by the Serbian major Miša Anastasievici (1803-1885)

2 — Fiddlers' street, Clejani

3 — The author together with the fiddler Marin Sandu nicknamed 'Țagoi' (left)

1, 2



3, 4



5, 6

- 1 — Crossroad in the 'District'.
- 2 — Wooden cross in the 'District'.
- 3 — Spoon and the tools for making it – Nicolae Dumitru.
- 4 — Broom making. Work phase – Maria Demeter.
- 5 — Raw materials, willow, for basket weaving.
- 6 — Basket and broom making. Work phase – Viorica Șerban și Maria Demeter.

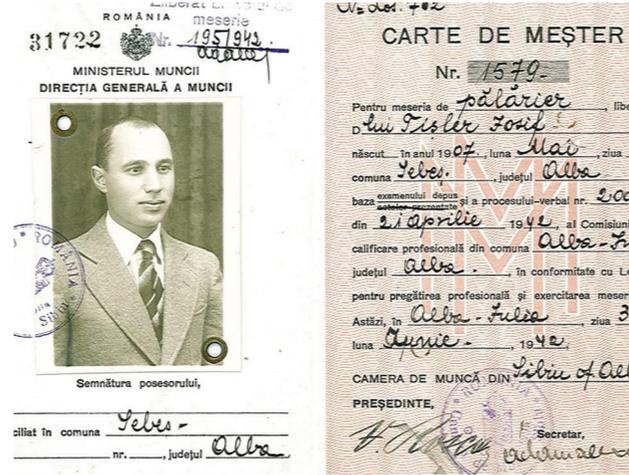
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3, 4

1, 2 — Saxon houses on the Evangelical Church street (Oana Burcea)  
3 — Şes street and Tent Gypsies' new houses (Oana Burcea)  
4 — Tent Gypsy in a fair in Sibiu (Alexandru Olănescu)

1, 2



3, 4



- 1 — Josif Tischler in his workshop in Sebeș, 24 Ianuarie street, Sebeș (Photo credit: Winfried Tischler's personal archive)
- 2 — Josif Tischler Craftsman's License, issued on June 3rd, 1942 in Alba-Iulia (Photo credit: Winfried Tischler's personal archive)
- 3 — Josif Tischler's Hatter Workshop Functioning License of April 17th, 1970 (Photo credit: Winfried Tischler's personal archive)
- 4 — The Sebeș Fair – Hats for sale (Photo credit: Winfried Tischler's personal archive)
- 5 — Josif Tischler's Hatter Workshop, 2003 (Photo credit: Winfried Tischler's personal archive)
- 6 — Josif Tischler Workshop – clients' space (Photo credit: Winfried Tischler's personal archive)

5



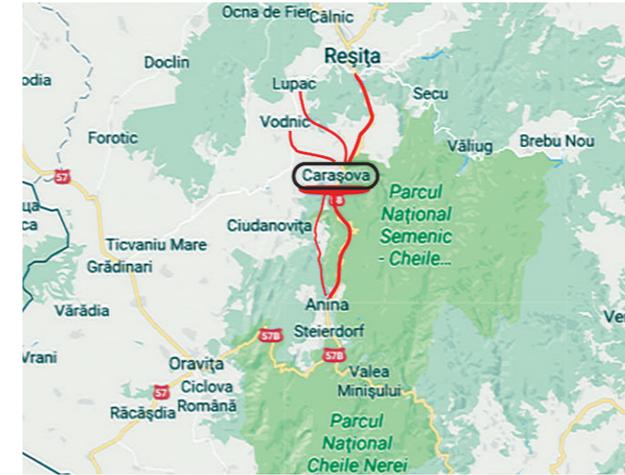
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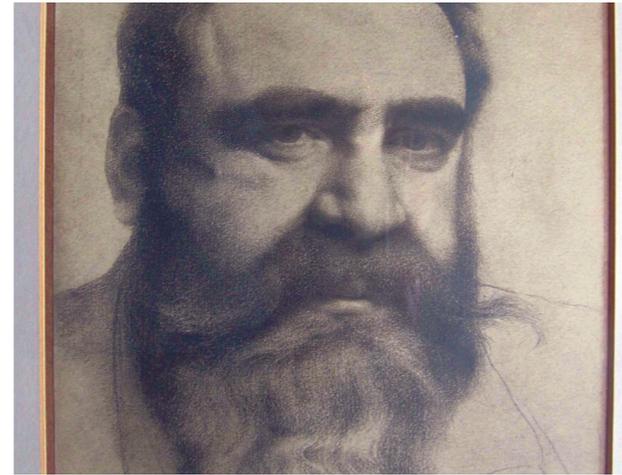
7 — Virgil Ilieș's Hatter Workshop, Galeș, Sibiu county: Wooden form blocks for peasants' cloche hat (Photo: the Graphical and Documentary Archive of the ASTRA Museum)

8 — The Hatter Radu Ilieș-Dădârlat of Săliște, Sibiu county (Photo credit: Karla Roșca)



1 – Location on the satellite map – the geographic position of Carașova in relation with other villages in the region (source: <https://www.google.com/maps>)

1, 2



3, 4



- 1 — Museum tag for stored box donated by Arthur Soterius von Sachsenheim upon his trip to Norway. “Franz Binder” Museum Collection, ASTRA National Museum Complex, Sibiu. (Photo credit: Silviu Popa)
- 2 — Arthur Soterius von Sachsenheim protrait by Robert Wellman (1905). (Source: Creative Commons [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arthur\\_Soterius\\_von\\_Sachsenheim.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arthur_Soterius_von_Sachsenheim.jpg))
- 3 — Objects in the Sámi collection at “Franz Binder” Museum. Reindeer bone pipe, spoon, Money Purse, Sewing Kit on a Seal skin. (Photo credit: Silviu Popa)
- 4 — Object in the Sámi collection at “Franz Binder” Museum. Puppet. (Photo credit: Silviu Popa)
- 5 — Sámi Family of Mathias Mortensson in Sverresborg Museum, 1935. Sverresborg, Trøndelag Folkemuseum, the Schröder Archive.

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